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DRAMATIC MISCELLANIES:

CONSISTING OF

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON SEVERAL

PLAYS OF SHAKSPEARE:

WITH A

REVIEW OF HIS PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS,
AND THOSE OF VARIOUS EMINENT WRITERS.

AS REPRESENTED

BY MR. GARRICK,

AND OTHER CELEBRATED COMEDIANS.

WITH

ANECDOTES OF DRAMATIC POETS, ACTORS, &c.

BY THOMAS DAVIES,

AUTHOR of MEMOIRS of the LIFE of
DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Μισω πλουτον αἰνουν, κολακων τροφον, ουδε παρ᾽ ὀφρυν
Στησομαι· οιδ᾽ ολιγης δαιτος ελευθεριην. Epig. Græc.

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T O

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS,

GEORGE,

PRINCE OF WALES.

SIR,

PERMIT me to intreat your patronage for the Dramatic Miſcellanies; in which the characters of Shakſpeare, and other celebrated authors, are conſidered and reviewed.

The portraits of our old monarchs, drawn by the great father of the Engliſh ſtage, merit the attention of the heir apparent to the crown of Great-Britain; the pencil of the divine poet has thrown a light on their characters, far ſuperior to the compoſition of the moſt elaborate narratives. What the hiſtorian coldly relates, Shakſpeare, by the glow of genius, animates and realizes.

The calamities, which befel certain princes of the Plantagenet line, as repreſented in the ſcenes of this admired writer, were principally owing to their contempt of thoſe laws, which they had ſolemnly engaged to maintain. The oppreſſion of the people created rebellion to the prince, and brought ruin to the kingdom. Theſe, ſir, are hiſtorical facts, painted in the moſt lively colours by the ſkill of the great dramatiſt, which will ever claim the ſerious regard of monarch and ſubject in this free country.

The illuſtrious houſe of Hanover was called to the throne of theſe realms, by the voice of the people, to ſupport that fabric of government, by which the limits of crown and the claims of the ſubject were the unalterable fixed and eſtabliſhed at the Revolution.

From that happy period, the ſovereign of England acquired the moſt glorious of all titles, A KING OF FREEMEN!

The many amiable qualities of your Royal Highneſs, which endear you to a great and generous nation, will invariably ſtimulate you to emulate the virtues of your anceſtors, to ſtand forth the friend of liberty, and the advocate of thoſe rights, the enjoyment of which can alone bring ſecurity to the prince and happineſs to the people!

When it ſhall pleaſe Divine Providence, at a diſtant period, to call your Royal Highneſs to the throne of theſe kingdoms, that you may reign in the hearts of a free and united people, is the earneſt prayer of,

SIR,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS's

Moſt obedient

And moſt humble ſervant,

THOMAS DAVIES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

TO publiſh my remarks on Shakſpeare, after the approved labours of ſo many eminent critics, will, I fear, be termed preſumption. The laſt edition of the great dramatiſt, by Dr. Johnſon and Mr. Steevens, which includes, beſides their own notes, the obſervations of their friends, men of name in the learned world, ought to have deterred me, it will be ſaid, from trying my ſtrength upon a ſubject ſo beaten, and ſo well underſtood and explained.

In the interpretation of Shakſpeare's phraſeology, ſo many commentators have differed widely from each other, ſo many plauſible reaſons have been ſuggeſted to ſupport their ſeveral opinions, that no apology ſeems needful for one who ſubmits his ſentiment to the general cenſure; and who, in preſuming to think for himſelf, is ſo far from treating thoſe who have gone before him with arrogance, that he is ever ready to own their pre-eminence, and to acknowledge his obligations to their uncommon induſtry, learning and ſagacity.

In carefully examining my ſolutions of ſome difficult texts, a few of them, I am obliged to own, are of little import; others are ſcarcely more than tranſcripts from former commentators, which had eſcaped my obſervation or memory. In both theſe particulars, I have not, I believe, often offended.

But the explaining Shakſpeare's text was but the ſmalleſt part of my deſign.

The plays of Shakſpeare, which are founded on Engliſh hiſtory, and which exhibt the actions and characters of our monarchs, I have always conſidered as a valuable treaſure to Engliſhmen, and of great importance to king and ſubject. In them, as in a mirror, future events, incidental to a mixed government, may be foreſeen, or, at leaſt, with probability conjectured.

In a free ſtate, like our's, encroachments of prerogative on privilege, and, vice verſa, of privilege on prerogative, muſt occaſionally happen. The conſequences, ariſing from both, no hiſtorian or political writer has painted in more lively colours than our great poet. He lived at a time it is true, when the limits of the crown and the liberties of the ſubject had not been duly fixed, and before the principles of the conſtitution had gained a firm eſtabliſhment by a legal ſettlement.

But the paſſions of men will be the ſame at all times, and no laws can be made ſo obligatory as to prevent the conſequence of their exceſſes on certain occaſions. The unhappy fate of miſguided arbitrary princes, and the miſchiefs which attend ſedition and rebellion in the people, will be ſubjects to intereſt this nation for ever.

The characters of Shakſpeare are the boaſt and honour of the Engliſh ſtage. Of the heroes and demigods, of the Greek and Roman drama, we have no reſemblances in our own minds to compare them with. The French theatre, which approaches neareſt to our own, delineates the perſons of their heroes in conformity to the manners of France. Let them be Greeks, Romans, or Turks, they have always ſomething in them of the Frenchman.

Shakſpeare preſents men to us as they really exiſted, ſuch as are congenial to our common nature.

When I undertook to write remarks on the principal characters of Shakſpeare, I found my plan too large for my canvas; for I could not, conſiſtently with my promiſe of giving obſervations on other dramatic poets, comprehend half the principal portraits of the great father of the Engliſh ſtage; nor can I, at the very advanced age of ſeventy, I fear, make any ſupplement to the Dramatic Miſcellanies, if they ſhould happen to pleaſe.

The comparing the merits of our principal comedians coſt me no ſmall attention to their diſcriminative faculties. I wiſh this part of my book may prove as entertaining to the public, and as profitable to the gentlemen and ladies of the theatre, as it was laborious to me.

Such books and pamphlets, as have furniſhed me with facts and anecdotes relating to authors and actors, I have generally referred to in the margin; ſome I have given from my own knowledge and obſervation; many of them I gleaned from old actors, long ſince deceaſed. The principal of theſe, as well as my memory can recollect, were Mr. John Roberts, a man of conſiderable reading and obſervation, who wrote an anſwer to that part of Pope's preface to Shakſpeare which related to Burbage and other players of his time; Mr. Morgan, commonly called Drib Morgan; Mr. Aſton, ſon to the famous itinerant actor, Tony Aſton; and Mr. Nathaniel Clarke. My acquaintance with Mr. Croſs, late prompter of Drury-lane theatre, has been of ſervice to me: he had known the ſtage long; and had recorded many facts of the actors in his days, which he occaſionally acquainted me with. Some obligations of this kind I owe Mr. Macklin. and more to Mr. Victor. Mr. Ebenezer Forreſt, the attorney, who had been long converſant with Covent-garden theatre, very kindly ſupplied me with ſome intereſting anecdotes.

The unexpected encouragement, given to the Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Garrick, by a generous public, demands my ſincere and grateful acknowledgment.

That the Memoirs were not agreeable to Mrs. Garrick gives me little uneaſineſs. Her diſlike of them may be accounted for, much to her honour, without reflecting any diſgrace on me.

In writing the life of a great and good man, (and ſuch, I preſume, with ſome allowance of human infirmity, I have deſcribed Mr. Garrick,) the honeſt

neſt biographer muſt relate ſome circumſtances of conduct which a tender and affectionate wiſe cannot peruſe with complacency.

I was not inattentive to the feelings of Mrs. Garrick.—When I was preparing a ſecond edition of my book, I wrote a letter to the gentleman who is the acting executor of Mr. Garrick's will; in which I deſired him to communicate any miſtakes or overſights I might have incurred in the Memoirs, and to point out any paſſage in it that might have given juſt offence to Mrs. Garrick or any of Mr. Garrick's family; promiſing, at the ſame time, to rectify any thing amiſs, in the new edition. To this letter I received no anſwer.

It is with pleaſure I can farther eſtabliſh a moſt valuable part of Mr. Garrick's character; I mean his charity and generoſity.

Dr. Ramſden, the worthy maſter of the Charterhouſe, very lately informed me, that a deſcendant of Grotius, who, by the intereſt of Dr. Johnſon, (a man who is never ſo well pleaſed as relieving the diſtreſſes of the indigent and promoting the happineſs of mankind,) was enabled to partake the excellent charity of that houſe, told him, that, by the death of Mr. Garrick, he had loſt a very great friend; and, being deſired to explain himſelf, he aſſured the maſter, that Mr. Garrick had ſettled a penſion on him of 10l. per annum during his own life.

I could mention a noble act of generoſity of this truly benevolent man; but reſpect for the living reſtrains me.

I might, indeed, juſtly ſay, that the charities of David Garrick were not only very extenſive, but many of them concealed from the world.

By the kind partiality of the public, I ſhall be enabled very ſoon, to publiſh a fourth edition of the Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick.

DRAMATIC

MISCELLANIES.

King John.

CHAPTER I.

Three plays written on the ſubject of K. John.—When Shakſpeare's K. John was firſt publiſhed—Shakſpeare indebted to the Troubleſome Reign of K. John.—Colley Cibber's Papal Tyranny.—Cibber's arrogance.—Theatrical progreſs of the Papal Tyranny.—Line in Pope's Dunciad upon it.—Revival of Shakſpeare's K. John by Rich.—Its ſucceſs and an account of the actors, particularly Walker, Hale, and Mrs. Hallam.—Sarcaſm of Quin.—Miſtake of Mr. Steevens and Mr. Theobald.—Scene of Baſtardy.—Queen Eleanor's logic in favour of the Baſtard Falconbridge.—Explanation of the word trick.*—Mr. Garrick puzzled to procure a contraſt.—Barry's perplexity.*

ON the ſubject of King John three plays have been written. That, which is called the Troubleſome Reign of King John, was attributed to Shakſpeare and Rowley by Mr. Pope, and by Mr. Steevens to Shakſpeare alone; but, on mature conſideration, this gentleman has retracted his opinion; Mr. Malone has, with great appearance of probability, aſcribed it to Marlow. Our author's K. John was firſt publiſhed, with the reſt of his works, in 1623. The late commentators have juſtly obſerved, that many of Shakſpeare's beſt pieces are formed on the ground-work of others. He ſeems more indebted to the author of the Troubleſome Reign of K. John, for his plot and characters, and even his ſentiments, than to any other writer. Colley Cibber's Papal Tyranny was taken from Shakſpeare's K. John, but he was not ſo happy in his alterations of his tragedy as in his King Richard the Third. In this laſt play, Colley very dextrouſly made up a very pleaſing paſticcio from a diligent peruſal of all Shakſpear's hiſtorical plays, ſcarcely making uſe of a line or thought which was his own. His Papal Tyranny he pretends was written to ſupply Shakſpeare's deficiencies, but more eſpecially the want of warm reſentment in a king of England when inſulted by a pope's nuncio; and, his play being acted in 1744, when the nation was alarmed with the threats of an invaſion by a popiſh pretender, the popular ſentiments, againſt the encroachments of papal influence, met with applauſe. Colley's vanity ſo far tranſported him, that, in his Dedication, he told Lord Cheſterfield, he had endeavoured to make his play more like one 'than what he 'found it in Shakſpeare.' But Cibber lived long enough to ſee his Papal Tyranny entirely neglected, and, what muſt have been more mortifying to a man of his extreme vanity, the original play revived with great ſucceſs. His bouncing, though well-meant, declamation againſt the inſolent pretenſions of papal power, could not make amends for his mutilations of Shakſpeare: and eſpecially for his murdering two characters of our inimitable poet, not inferior perhaps to any which fell from his pen; Lady Conſtance and the Baſtard Falconbridge. However, it is to Cibber, I believe, we owe the revival of this tragedy, which had lain dormant from the days of Shakſpeare till 1736.

The Papal Tyranny had been offered to Mr. Fleetwood, the manager of Drury-lane theatre, about nine or ten years before it was acted. This was no ſooner known to the public, than Cibber was moſt ſeverely attacked by the critics in the newſpapers; Fielding wrote a farce upon the ſubject, which was played at the little theatre in the Haymarket, though I do not believe it is printed amongſt his works. However, the parts in the Papal Tyranny were diſtributed, and a time fixed for its performance: but the clamour againſt the author, whoſe preſumption was highly cenſured for daring to meddle with Shakſpeare, increaſed to ſuch a height, that Colley, who had ſmarted more than once for dabbling in tragedy, went to the playhouſe, and, without ſaying a word to any body, took the play from the prompter's deſk, and marched off with it in his pocket. Pope, in his new edition of the Dunciad, which he had taken the pains to alter, in order to dethrone Theobald and place Cibber in his room, in the following line hints at the cautious conduct of the poet-laureat:

> King John in ſilence modeſtly expires.
>
> DUNC. Book I.

So much was ſaid, and with propriety, by the critics who wrote againſt Cibber in the public prints, in commendation of Shakſpeare's K. John, that Mr. Rich very wiſely determined to take the hint, and reſolved to revive that long-forgotten tragedy. The principal parts, if I can truſt my memory, were thus divided: King John, Mr. Delane; the Baſtard, Tom Walker, (the original Macheath;) Hale acted the King of France, and Ryan Cardinal Pandulph; Lady Conſtance by Mrs. Hallam. Of Delane, Walker, and Ryan, I have ſpoken at large in the life of Garrick; and in the courſe of this work ſhall have frequent occaſion to mention them. Hale was in perſon tall and well-proportioned, his voice ſtrong and harmonious, his deportment manly, and his action not diſpleaſing; his ear was ſo unfaithful, that he was generally monotonous; he wanted that judgment which alone knows how to give dignity to ſentiment or warmth and variety to paſſion. His beſt performance was Hotſpur; he was always to be endured when he reſtrained himſelf from doing too much. He was a favourite actor in Briſtol, where I think he died in 1746. He was ſo fond of wearing large full-bottomed wigs, that, to the aſtoniſhment of the audience, he acted the part of Charles the Firſt in one which was remarkably long and fair.*

Mrs. Hallam was an actreſs of ſuch uncommon merit, that ſhe deſerves to be particularly remembered. She had ſignalized herſelf ſo greatly as a member of the company acting at Norwich, when her name was Parker, that ſhe received an invitation from Mr. Rich to join his company at Lincoln's-inn Fields. There ſhe long ſtruggled with difficulties; for I have been told ſhe was by no means a favourite of the manager: but on the death of Mrs. Boheme, many of her principal parts fell to the lot of Mrs. Hallam. The great encouragement, ſhe conſtantly met with from the audience, at once raiſed her reputation and increaſed her income. Her merit, indeed, was indiſputable; for ſhe ſucceeded a performer as remarkable for beauty as ſkill in her profeſſion. Mrs. Hallam was unhappy in a large unwieldy perſon: notwithſtanding this unfavourable circumſtance, the public always wiſhed to ſee her in characters which received no advantage from her figure. Monimia was a part which her good underſtanding would have taught her to reſign; but neither the public nor the manager would permit it. You may gueſs at the unfitneſs of her figure for young and delicate ladies by Quin's ſarcaſm. He obſerved one morning, at rehearſal, a large tub, or barrel, in which the mad Engliſhman in the Pilgrim rolls about the ſtage; he aſked the prompter what it was; but, before he could receive an anſwer, he cried out, *I ſee what it is: Mrs. Hallam's ſtays, in which ſhe played Monimia laſt night.* Her performance of Lady Conſtance was natural and impaſſioned; though ſhe was not ſo pathetic in utterance, ſpirited in action, or dignified in deportment, as Mrs. Cibber in the ſame part. Her principal characters in tragedy were Lady Macbeth, Belvidera, Roxana, Qeen Elizabeth in the Earl of Eſſex, Zara in the Mourning Bride, Evadne in the Maid's Tragedy, the Queen in Hamlet; in comedy ſhe excelled in Congreve's Lady Touchwood in the Double Dealer, his Marwood in the Way of the World, Amanda in Cibber's Love's laſt Shift, Steele's Lady Brumpton in the Funeral, &c. Mrs. Hallam died about the year 1738.

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* It has been ſaid, that this actor was much hurt by Mr. Garrick's mimickry of him in the part of Bayes in the Rehearſal. Hale was preſent at the play, and laughing very heartily at the mimical exhibitions of Delane, Ryan, Bridgwater, and Giffard; when, on a ſudden, Garrick ſpoke three or four lines of Prince Prettyman, beginning with

> "Oh! what a ſtranger am I grown of late!"

in a ſtyle which conveyed ſuch an exact reſemblance of Hale's voice and manner, that the theatre echoed with loud laughter and thundering applauſe. Hale was ſhocked at the mortifying ſcene, and felt the folly and injuſtice of approving that ridicule of others which he could not bear himſelf.

King John was acted ſeveral nights with great applauſe; but the king was not remarkably well repreſented by Delane; he could not eaſily aſſume the turbulent and gloomy paſſions of the character.

Mr. Steevens has fallen into a ſlight miſtake, if that note be his, in which it is ſaid, that Hall, Hollingſhead, and Stowe, are cloſely followed in the expreſſions throughout this, as well as ſeveral other hiſtorical plays of Shakſpeare: Hall begins his Chronicle about two hundred years after the æra in which John began to reign. Mr. Theobald has likewiſe committed an error: he aſſerts, that, although the play begins in the 34th year of K. John's life, which was the firſt of his reign, yet that it takes in only ſome tranſactions at the time of his death; whereas the tragedy very properly begins with the claim of John's nephew, Prince Arthur, to the crown: this was one of the moſt material events in the king's life; and his conduct to Arthur, Shakſpeare very judiciouſly makes the foundation of all his misfortunes.

If I do not miſtake, Mr. Steevens has miſunderſtood a paſſage in a ſpeech of Q. Eleanor in the firſt ſcene of this play:

> This might have been prevented, and made whole
> With very eaſy argument of love;
> Which now the *manage* of two kingdoms muſt
> With fearful bloody iſſue arbitrate.

By the word *manage* I underſtand the ſtrength and power of France and England, rather than, according to Mr. Steevens, the conduct and adminiſtration of them, which ſeems more remote from the author's meaning; though perhaps the word may comprehend both.

The ſcene between the two brothers, Robert and Philip Falconbridge, is a very extraordinary one, and hardly to be matched in dramatic poetry. One brother calls the other baſtard, and accuſes his mother of adultery; which charge the other does not flatly deny, but is unwilling to part with his claim to the eſtate. The original of this quarrel is to be found, I believe, in an old book, quoted by Mr. Steevens, called the Hiſtory of Lord Falconbridge, Baſtard-Son to Richard Cœur de Lion. Our author has followed the old play, with ſuch alterations and additions, as his genius ſuggeſted to him, which I think never ſhone brighter than in his management of Falconbridge's character.

Shakſpeare has avoided a very groſs impropriety by not permitting the mother of Falconbridge to be preſent when her chaſtity is called in queſtion by her ſon; an error which the author of the old play has fallen into. In that, too, Queen Eleanor exerts all her power in favour of the lady, and plays the caſuiſt ſo acutely, that ſhe merits the reputation of learning which hiſtorians aſcribe to her. The king obſerves, in confirmation of what Robert Falconbridge had affirmed, that Philip the Baſtard reſembled King Richard, whom Robert aſſerts to have been his father; the queen's reply is, I think, curious, and worth preſerving.

ELEANOR.

Nay, hear you, ſir: you run away too faſt.
Know you not, *omne ſimile non eſt idem*?
————Hark you, good ſir; 'twas thus, and no otherwiſe: ſhe lay with Sir Robert, your father, and thought upon King Richard, my ſon; and ſo your brother was formed in this faſhion.

In the old play, the Baſtard draws his ſword upon his mother, and threatens to kill her if ſhe conceals the truth. In Shakſpeare, the lady's confeſſion is extorted by mirth and pleaſantry. In Shakſpeare's King John, Queen Eleanor takes notice that the Baſtard

Hath a *trick* of Cœur-de-Lion's face.

I am not ſure that Mr. Steevens hath hit the full meaning of the word *trick*, though he has brought ſeveral authorities to ſupport his interpretation of it.

In this and other places, by the word *trick* Shakſpeare means ſome diſtinguiſhing air or feature of the face, in which a ſtrong reſemblance of the parent may be diſcovered.

In the Winter's Tale, Paulina proves the legitimacy of Queen Hermione's daughter by *a trick of face* which ſhe has in common with her father:

---------- Behold, my lords,
The trick of 's frown !--------
WINTER'S TALE, Act II.

So Falſtaff, when repreſenting Henry the Fourth, in a mock-ſcene between the Prince of Wales and himſelf, tells the Prince,

> Thou art my ſon: I have partly thy mother's word, partly my own opinion; but chiefly *a villainous trick of thine eye, and a fooliſh hanging of thy nether lip.*

In the ſame ſcene the Baſtard exclaims,

With that half-face!

That this expreſſion was taken from coins, on which the profile only of our princes was exhibited, Theobald has well enough proved. An author, I think, is always beſt illuſtrated by himſelf: Hotſpur, in Henry the Fourth, Act I. in the midſt of his extravagant and wild flights, exclaims,

But out upon this half-fac'd fellowſhip

Various have been the actors of this brave, generous, romantic, and humorous, character, Falconbridge: but though Garrick, Sheridan, Delane, and Barry, have attempted it, they all fell ſhort of the merits of Tom Walker. In him alone were found the ſeveral requiſites for the character: a ſtrong and muſcular perſon, a bold and intrepid look; manly deportment, vigorous action, and a humour which deſcended to an eaſy familiarity in conveying a jeſt or ſarcaſm with uncommon poignancy. Garrick had certainly much merit in the Baſtard, but the want of the mechanical part was a deficiency not to be remedied by art.

He was at a loſs, for ſome time, to fix upon a Robert Falconbridge, to ſet off his own figure;

aſt he picked out poor Simſon, a Scotchman, a modeſt and honeſt man, but as feeble in perſon as he was in acting. Friar John, the contraſt to Friar Paul, in the Duenna, was ſcarce a greater ſkeleton than Simſon. It was a matter of aſtoniſhment to every ſpectator, that Barry, with the ſuperior advantage of a fine perſon, could make ſo little of the Baſtard. He ſeemed, in that part, to be quite out of his road: all the humour, gaiety, eaſe, and gallantry, of Falconbridge, were loſt in Barry.

An odd circumſtance happened on his endeavouring to repeat the following words in the firſt act of the play:

> Well now I can make any Joan a lady.

He was ſo embarraſſed in the delivery of this ſingle line, that, not being able to repeat the words, he was forced to quit the ſtage, amidſt the general applauſes of the audience, who ſaw and felt his uneaſineſs. But, what is ſtill more ſurpriſing, after going off and returning three ſeveral times, with the ſame kind encouragement of the ſpectators, he was forced to give it up; and I believe he did not recover himſelf till he was relieved by the entrance of Lady Falconbridge.

CHAPTER II.

The character of Philip Auguſtus.—Princes, of the preſent age, Trajans when compared to thoſe in the reign of John.—Lymoges, duke of Auſtria.—Shakſpeare oftener adheres to old ballads and romances than chronicle or hiſtory.——A vile groupe of ſovereign princes—Henry VI. *emperor of Germany.—Popes in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.—The old man of the mountains.—Prince Arthur's right of primogeniture.—Character of Queen Eleanor, at large, from the French hiſtorians and Brantome.—An aſs wearing ſhoes.—Reaſon why Eleanor prefers King John to Arthur.—Explanation of a term in hunting, from Turberville.—The word* ſtay *explained.—Obſervation on Falconbridge's ſpeech at the end of the third act.*

Act II. Scene I.

IN the ſecond act of King John, the poet introduces, amongſt other characters, Philip Auguſtus of France; and, if extreme cunning, unbounded ambition, fraud, perfidy, perjury, rapine, and injuſtice, could render a monarch a politician, he was certainly the greateſt of his time. Shakſpeare was not obliged to ſhew the whole of his character, and, indeed, it is ſo comprehenſively odious, that no audience would have ſuffered it. The princes, who now rule over the greateſt part of Europe, though many of them are little attentive to the real intereſts of their people, and more fond of power than willing to make a right uſe of it, may be termed by the honourable title of Trajans, if compared with the royal monſters of this period. Lymoges, arch-duke of Auſtria, is, in this ſcene, raiſed from the dead to be puniſhed for his baſe uſage of Richard I. whom he arreſted in his paſſage through his dominions, and afterwards, for a ſtipulated ſum, delivered to the emperor of Germany. The offence, given by Richard, was ſome ſharp or proud expreſſion he let fall againſt the duke, when both were engaged in the holy wars. The old play could not lead Shakſpeare into the error of aſcribing the death of Richard to the duke of Auſtria, as Mr. Steevens has aſſerted; he was too well acquainted with our chronicles, and eſpecially Hollingſhead, to miſtake that event. But Shakſpeare oftner ſtudies ſtage effect than he adheres to the truth of hiſtory; and, in treating of remote ſtory, he is certainly juſtifiable for this deviation. But Shakſpeare choſe too, in this play, and in moſt others, to follow old romance and ballad rather than chronicle or authenticated ſtory. Perhaps no æra ſince the creation produced ſuch a groupe of pernicious chief rulers as the time of which I am ſpeaking: beſides our own John, Philip, and the duke of Auſtria, we can reckon, amongſt them, Henry VI. emperor of Germany, ſeveral popes ſucceſſively in order, and a very remarkable potentate, called the Old Man of the Mountains. As for Henry, he, of all princes, was the leaſt ſcrupulous; perfidy, cruelty, oppreſſion, and avarice, were his darling paſſions; as ſoon as he got the poſſeſſion of Richard's perſon, he threw him into a dungeon; nay, to inſult him more conſpicuouſly, he produced him before the princes of Germany in a diet of the empire: but Richard's undaunted ſpirit and convincing eloquence produced an effect contrary to the emperor's intention; they all interceded in his favour, and inſiſted he ſhould be delivered from confinement; but, before he would grant him his liberty, he exacted the immenſe ſum of three hundred thouſand pounds, equal to a million and a half of our money. The meaneſt dabbler in hiſtory will readily agree, that by far the greateſt part of the popes, who lived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, were inferior to no kings, that ever lived, in pride, inſolence, avarice, injuſtice, and rapine. If we ſhould grant that in knowledge and learning they were ſuperior to the reſt of mankind, it muſt likewiſe be owned, that they perverted theſe acquirements to the worſt of purpoſes; to the deceiving and robbing thoſe who put an implicit confidence in them.

The Old man of the mountains was called Chik Elchaſſiſſin, from which word Voltaire derives the word aſſaſſin. This hoary ruffian had acquired ſuch an aſcendant over his fanatical ſubjects, that they paid an implicit obedience to his commands; aſſaſſination was meritorious with them, when under the ſanction of his royal mandate; they carried their enthuſiaſtic zeal for his ſervice ſo far as to court all hazards, and even to ruſh wildly on to certain death in the execution of his orders*. Theſe miſerable wretches fancied that, when they ſacrificed their lives for his ſake, the gates of paradiſe would be open to them.

Every part of this digreſſion will, I hope, be amuſing at leaſt, and ſome of it not uſeleſs, to the common reader of Shakſpeare's John.

Act II. Scene II.

CHATILLON.

With him along is come the mother queen,
An Ate ſtirring him to blood and ſtrife.

The term, Ate, is very properly beſtowed upon this lady; in her huſband king Henry's lifetime ſhe was the trumpet of rebellion and treaſon, and was continually urging her ſons to take up arms againſt their father.

PHILIP.

For thou haſt underwrought its lawful king.

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* Hume's Hiſt. of England, vol. II. p. 18.

Thou haſt prevented the lawful ſucceſſor from enjoying what belongs to him, by cutting off the right of poſterity. The feudal law, which was then in full force over all Europe, had eſtabliſhed the right of primogeniture. In England as well as elſewhere, the ſon of the elder brother was entitled to ſucceed to his grandfather, preferably to his uncles, though they were nearer allied to the deceaſed monarch. But the right line of ſucceſſion had in no country, except Scotland, been ſo often broken through, perhaps, as in ours, antecedent to this period. That order, or right, had been violated no leſs than three times in the ſpace of about fourſcore years. Richard, when he ſet out upon the holy war, declared his nephew Arthur, of Brittany, his ſucceſſor; but, notwithſtanding John's ingratitude and rebellion, he, at the inſtigation of his mother, by his laſt will declared him heir to all his dominions: and this will the queen refers to, when, in anſwer to ſome outrageous accuſations of Lady Conſtance, ſhe replies,

Thou unadviſed ſcold, I can produce
A will, that bars the title of thy ſon.

LADY CONSTANCE.

My boy a baſtard! By my ſoul, I think
His father never was ſo true begot;
It cannot be, and if thou wert his mother.

To underſtand the propriety of Lady Conſtance's ſpeech, which contains ſo heavy a charge, it is neceſſary that the reader of this tragedy ſhould be previouſly acquainted with Queen Eleanor's character.

This lady was daughter of the duke of Guienne, and wife to Louis VII. of France, to whom ſhe brought in dowry ſome of the richeſt provinces of that kingdom. Her reputation for chaſtity was far from being clear, when Louis took her with him on a cruſade into the holy land. The French hiſtorians, and, amongſt the reſt, Mezeray, an author whoſe name I am ſurpriſed not to find amongſt the moſt eminent French hiſtorians, in one of the fineſt poems which this age has produced *, tells us ſtrange ſtories of her inordinate and unſatisfied luſt. It is ſaid ſhe was particularly fond of Saladin, the emperor; others tell us, that it was Saladin, a private ſoldier, and a very handſome Saracen, of whom ſhe was deeply enamoured. Let us hear what honeſt Brantome ſays, in his blunt, but expreſſive, language.

“ Our Queen Eleanor, ducheſs of Guienne, who attended the king, her huſband, beyond ſea, and who, by frequently converſing amongſt arms and the ſoldiery, gave herſelf ſuch a looſe at laſt as to have to do with the Saracens, for which the king divorced her, and which coſt us dear. She had a mind to try whether theſe warlike men were as brave champions in a bed-chamber as in the field of battle. Poſſibly it was her humour to love valiant men.”

This plain-ſpoken writer, in another place, ſays, that Queen Eleanor was not the only one who went to the holy war in company with Louis; ‘*Pluſieurs grandes dames avec leur marys ſe croiſerent, mais non leur jambes, qu'elles ouvrirent, et les largirent a bon eſcient; ſi qu'aucunes y demeurerent, et les autres retournerent, de tres bonnes veſſes*’.

Notwithſtanding Eleanor's ill fame, and her being divorced from her huſband for lewdneſs, in reality, though pretendedly, on account of too near conſanguinity, our King Henry II. was not ſo ſqueamiſh as to neglect the opportunity of adding ſeveral noble and rich provinces to his dominions by accepting her hand. They were both in the prime and vigour of life, and their eagerneſs to come together was evident by the quick journeys they took to meet each other. No couple of ardent lovers ſeemed more willing to be united in the nuptial bond than Henry and Eleanor. Their happineſs did not laſt long; ſhe was as jealous of Henry as her firſt huſband had been of her, and with reaſon: but Henry was not ſo mild as Louis; he confined her in priſon during the greateſt part of his reign. I ſhall conclude this note with the remarkable words of Mezeray: "This woman, conſummate in all ſorts of wickedneſs, lived eighty years, kept up a war for above ſixty years, and ſettled a hatred between France and England, that has continued above three ages; ſo that with reaſon we may ſay of her, what the Greek poet ſaid of Menelaus's wife, that we have ſuffered not a ten, but a *four hundred years war, with fire and ſword, by means of this woman.*"

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* Hayley on Hiſtory.

FALCONBRIDGE.

It lies as ſightly on the back of him
As great Alcides' *ſhoes* upon an aſs.

A more whimſical and ludicrous image cannot be preſented to the mind, than an aſs trotting up and down, his hoofs covered over with fair large buſkins, fit for the feet of Hercules. The ſenſe is very clear, but Theobald, ſuppoſing that the aſs could carry ſhoes no where but on his back, altered *ſhoes* to *ſhews*. Mr. Steevens has, from ſeveral parallel paſſages of old authors, proved the frequent uſe of the term *Hercules' ſhoes*, apparently from the old proverb, *ex pede Herculem.*

LADY CONSTANCE.

Give grandam kingdom, and it grandam will
Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig.

The inveterate hatred of theſe two ladies, the Queen and the Dycheſs of Britanny, was founded on ſomething more ſubſtantial than mere perſonal pique. Eleanor, it is ſaid by hiſtorians, had a ſtronger affection towards her nephew Arthur than her ſon John; but ſhe juſtly apprehended, if Arthur had ſucceeded to the crown, his mother, who was a woman of an excellent underſtanding and of an undaunted mind, would have had the direction of his affairs; this prompted the dowager to eſpouſe the cauſe of John, who paid great deference to her counſels.

ENGLISH HERALD.

And, like a jolly troop of huntſmen, come
Our luſty Engliſh, all with purple hands,
Dy'd in the dying ſlaughter of their foes.

There is in Julius Cæſar, Act III. a paſſage quite ſimilar to this; Mark Antony, in an apoſtrophe to the dead body of Cæſar, compares his murderers to hunters ſtained with the blood of the ſlain deer.

Pardon me, Julius, here waſt thou bay'd, brave hart!
Here didſt thou fall, and here thy hunters ſtand,
Sign'd in thy ſpoil, and crimſon'd in thy lethe.

Dr. Johnſon, in a note upon the firſt cited paſſage, thinks it was one of the ſavage practices of the chace, for all the hunters to ſtain their hands in the blood of the deer as a trophy.

Upon looking into Turberville's book of Hunting, I can ſee no trace of that practice; but there are two different accounts of the French and Engliſh manner of diſſecting or breaking up the deer. In dividing the ſeveral parts of the deer, the French employed the hand of the huntſman alone; but our Engliſh kings, barons, and other great men, took part of that office upon themſelves. *Our order is*, ſays Turberville, *that the prince or chiefe (if ſo pleaſe them) do alight, and take aſſaye of the deere, with a ſharpe knife, the which is done in this manner; the deere being layde upon his backe, the prince, chiefe, or ſuch as they do appoint, comes to it, and the*

the chiefe huntſman, kneeling, if it be to a prince, doth hold the deer by the ſore foot, whi'e the prince or chiefe do cut a ſlit, drawn alongſt the bryſket of the deere.

The deer's head is alſo cut off by the prince or chief; in theſe operations, the diſſecters muſt neceſſarily be ſprinkled or beſmeared with the blood of the animal, and to this our author, in both paſſages, ſeems plainly to allude.

FALCONBRIDGE.

> ---------Here's a ſtay;
> That ſhakes the rotten carcaſs of old death
> Out of his rags.

I muſt own, I ſee no great difficulty in the word *ſtay*; which means no more, notwithſtanding all the attributes given to it by the ſpeaker, than a very great and almoſt inſurmountable obſtacle. Perhaps the power of the word *ſtay* may be beſt known from a very old author; from Gawin Dowglas's Tranſlation of Virgil take the four following lines:

> Ane port there is whom the eſt fludis has
> In manere of ane boule or bay,
> With rochis ſet forgane the ſtreme *full ſtay*,
> To brek the ſalt fame of the ſeyis ſtoure.

The very learned and modeſt author of the Gloſſary to this book, for no man knows to whom he is obliged for that excellent and learned commentary of old and difficult words, Scottiſh and Saxon, explains *ſtay* by *ſteep*, "as we ſay in Scotland, a *ſtay brae*, a high bank of difficult aſcent, from the verb *ſtay*, to ſtop or hinder, becauſe the ſteepneſs retards thoſe who climb it, as the Latins ſay, *iter impeditum, loca impedita*; or, from the Belgic, *ſtegigh, præruptus.*"

Mr. Steevens and Mr. Malone have brought many paſſages from old writers to prove the uſe of the word *ſtay* in the ſenſe wherein it is applied by Shakſpeare.

BASTARD.

Mad world! Mad kings! Mad compoſition!

Theobald, with great propriety, finiſhes the ſecond act with this ſoliloquy of Falconbridge, which is a very humorous and ſatirical application to the ſelfiſh feelings of the far greateſt part of mankind. But why *mad* world! *mad* kings! and *mad* compoſition? The treaty was a counter-part to almoſt all the treaties which have been made between princes for many ages paſt. Honour, faith, juſtice, and common honeſty, on theſe occaſions, are little regarded; and intereſt, or commodity, as Shakſpeare terms it, ſolely kept in view by the contractors. It is true, that treaties are entered into in the moſt ſolemn manner, and in the name of the holy and undivided Trinity; but this is matter of mere form, and by many princes, as little remembered as a coronation-oath, which is always taken with great ſolemnity, and but ſeldom called to mind, except with a view to make free with it.

Had Shakſpeare ſaid *bad* world, &c. it would have been nearer the mark. But, in our author's language, which is equally copious and licentious, the word *mad* ſometimes ſignifies, as it does here, *ſtrange! odd! prepoſterous! abſurd!*

CHAPTER III.

Character of Lady Conſtance.—Admirably acted by Mrs. Cibber.—Mrs. Butler ſet up as her rival.—Quin's opinion of Mrs. Cibber.—High tides in the calendar.—Mrs. Cibber and Winſtone.—Reaſons why Mr. Macklin ſhould not have acted Pandulph.—Quin's ſarcaſm.—Cibber inferior, in the Pope's Legate, to Macklin, and why.—Mrs. Pritchard refuſes Colley Cibber's advice.—Stephen Langton's character.—Shakſpeare not a Roman Catholic.—Anecdote of Walker and Boman.

HITHERTO the character of Conſtance has been ſeen to little advantage. Her ſpeeches were rather more comformable to the ſcold or virago than the injured princeſs and afflicted mother. In the firſt ſcene of the third act ſhe appears with the dignity of juſt reſentment and majeſty of maternal grief. To ſuppoſe that the art of acting was not amply, if not perfectly, underſtood and practiſed, in the days of our author, would be an injury to the feelings of every intelligent reader. How many variations of action and paſſion are in the firſt ſpeech of this ſcene, conſiſting only of twenty ſix lines, all naturally reſulting from the agitations of a mind anxiouſly inquiring into the truth of that which it dreads to know! Even the under character, Saliſbury, is called upon, by the words of Conſtance, to expreſs the different paſſions of his mind by variety as well as juſtneſs of action; as in the following lines:

What doſt thou mean by ſhaking of thy head?
Why doſt thou look ſo ſadly on my ſon?
What means that hand upon that breaſt of thine?
Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum?
Be theſe ſad ſighs confirmers of thy words?

Lady Conſtance's paſſionate effuſion of rage, grief, and indignation, from which ſcarce a line or thought can be expunged, to his eternal diſgrace, Cibber has either entirely ſuppreſſed, or wretchedly ſpoiled, by vile and degrading interpolations; nay, the whole ſcene is deformed and mutilated, that little of the creative power of Shakſpeare is to be ſeen in it.

To utter, with the utmoſt harmony and propriety all the ſucceeding changes of grief, anger, reſentment, rage, deſpondency, reviving courage, and animated defiance, incidental to Lady Conſtance, and to accompany them with correſpondent propriety and vehemence of action, was a happineſs only known to Mrs. Cibber. Mrs. Hallam wanted not ſpirit nor pathos in this part; nor would Mrs. Pritchard have fallen ſo below herſelf, if Cibber had not miſled her. To ſpeak the truth, Mrs. Cibber has had no ſucceſſor in this part but Mrs. Yates, who yet, it muſt be confeſſed, notwithſtanding her great and juſtly-applauded ſkill, is inferior.

When Mrs. Cibber threw herſelf on the ground in pronouncing

> ———Here I and ſorrow ſit;
> Here is my throne, let kings come bow to it.

Her voice, look, and perſon, in every limb, ſeemed to be animated with the true ſpirit which the author had infuſed into her character.

And yet I remember, when Cibber's King John was in rehearſal at Drury-Lane theatre, ſo little was the merit of Mrs. Cibber known to the world, that, in oppoſition to her, a party was formed in favour of Mrs. Butler, the original actreſs of Millwood, in Barnwell, who was ſaid to be an illegitimate daughter of a noble duke whoſe monument is erected in Weſtminſter-abbey. Nay, when the original play was afterwards revived in 1744, at the ſame theatre, in oppoſition to Cibber's Papal Tyranny Mr. Garrick was ſo little acquainted with the genuine powers of this charming Melpomene, that, accidentally meeting Mr. Quin at the Bedford Coffee-houſe, he told him he doubted of Mrs. Cibber's being able to do juſtice to ſo vigorous and trying a part as Lady Conſtance: Quin thought otherwiſe; and ſaid to him, with ſome warmth, ' Don't tell me, Mr. Garrick, *that woman has a heart, and can do any thing where paſſion is required.*'

LADY CONSTANCE.

What hath this day deſerv'd? What hath it done?
That it in golden letters ſhould be ſet
Among the high tides in the calendar?

High tides Mr. Malone cannot ſuppoſe is uſed by the poet as ſynonimous to what Mr. Steevens very properly alledges they are, ſolemn ſeaſons: Mr. Malone did not reflect that high tides bear a very different meaning from his intention. They are marks of ruin and deſolation, not of proſperity and feſtivity; and, I believe, are oftner found in chronological tables than in the rubric of a calendar.

LADY CONSTANCE.

O Lymoges, O Auſtria, thou doſt ſhame
That bloody ſpoil: thou ſlave, thou wretch, thou coward! &c.

This vehement charge of perfidy, cowardice, perjury, and every ſpecies of villany, which is concluded with the moſt ſtinging reproach and contemptuous raillery, requires the utmoſt ſkill of the ſpeaker. Mrs. Cibber's voice was ſo happily modulated by a moſt accurate ear, that every material word in this uncommon burſt of indignation, was impreſſed ſo judiciouſly and harmoniouſly upon the audience, that they could not refrain a loud and repeated teſtimony of their approbation. But part of the pleaſure to be obtained from this ſcene muſt be owing to the correſponding behaviour of Auſtria; if he does not contribute to the general deception by feeling the reproaches of Conſtance, the vigour of the ſentiments will be weakened, and the intention of the author diſappointed. The character of Auſtria is very unamiable; and Mrs. Cibber, when the play was firſt in rehearſal, could not eaſily prevail on Winſtone to make Auſtria appear as odious to an audience as he ought. Winſtone was an actor of ſingular ſkill in two or three parts: he was as honeſt and aukward a country booby in John Moody, in the Provoked Huſband, as the author deſigned him; and, in Ben Johnſon's Downright, he made an excellent grotеſque picture of abrupt plain-dealing and unfaſhionable ſimplicity. He had the good fortune to gain a conſiderable ſum of money in a lottery about thirty years ſince, and retired to live on an eſtate which he purchaſed in Monmouthſhire. But it was impoſſible for any man long to reſiſt the perſuaſive manner of Mrs. Cibber. Winſtone fully anſwered her idea of Auſtria's character.

KING PHILIP.

Here comes the holy legate of the pope.

The character of Pandulph has not, as yet, been repreſented with that dignity and inportance which it demands.

Macklin, whoſe ſkill in acting is acknowledged to be ſuperior to that of any man, who is the beſt teacher of the art, and is ſtill, at a very advanced age, a powerful comedian, as well as a good comic writer, ſhould have refuſed this part; neither his perſon, voice, action, or deportment, conveyed any idea of a great delegate from the head of the church, or the ſpiritual monarch of Chriſtendom. Quin, who was preſent at the revival of King John at Drury-lane, ſaid Macklin was like a cardinal who had been formerly a pariſh-clerk.

And yet, it muſt be owned, Macklin underſtood the logic of the part, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, better than any body. But the man, who preſumes to controul the will of mighty monarchs, ſhould have a perſon which beſpeaks authority, a look commanding reſpect, graceful action, and majeſtic deportment. But Colley Cibber's Pandulph was leſs agreeable to an audience than Macklin's; the voice of the latter, though rough, was audible. The former's pipe was ever powerleſs, and now, through old age, ſo weak, that his words were rendered inarticulate. His manner of ſpeaking was much applauded by ſome, and by others as greatly diſliked, in the Pope's Legate, as in moſt of his tragic characters. The unnatural ſwelling of his words diſpleaſed all who preferred natural elocution to artificial cadence. The old man was continually adviſing Mrs. Pritchard, who acted Lady Conſtance, to *tone* her words; but ſhe, by obeying her own feelings and liſtening to her own judgment, gained approbation and applauſe; which was not the caſe with his ſon Theophilus, who acted the Dauphin, and Mrs. Bellamy, who played Lady Blanch. They, by obeying their director's precepts, were moſt ſeverely exploded. But Colley's deportment was, I think, as diſguſting as his utterance. He affected a ſtately magnificent tread, a ſupercilious aſpect, with lofty and extravagant action, which he diſplayed by waving up and down a roll of parchment in his right hand; in ſhort, his whole behaviour was ſo ſtarchly ſtudied, that it appeared eminently inſignificant, and more reſembling his own Lord Foppington than a great and dignified churchman.

PANDULPH.

-------And force per force
Keep Stephen Langton, choſen archbiſhop
Of Canterbury, from that holy ſee.

Stephen Langton, archbiſhop of Canterbury, deſerves to be held in everlaſting remembrance by all Engliſhmen; to this generous and wiſe prelate we are more indebted than, perhaps, to any of the aſſociated barons, who obliged King John to ſign the great charter of our liberties. Langton is a proof that every man of ſenſe will be independent if he can; for, notwithſtanding he owed his advancement to the ſee of Canterbury to the pope, as ſoon as ever it was in his power, he became a ſtrenuous oppoſer of all meaſures which tended to ſubject the crown of England to a foreign potentate. All the copies of Henry the Firſt's great charter, which had been lodged in the capitularies of religious houſes, were loſt, and it is ſuppoſed that King John had made away with them. Langton, by diligence or accident, found one; and this was made the ground-work of the new charter: but Langton had paved the way for this noble eſtabliſhment of rights, by inſerting, in the oath taken by the king, when he abſolved him, the following article, "That he would re-eſtabliſh the good laws of King Edward the Confeſſor;" laws, which Hume, in the earlier part of his hiſtory, ſeems to overlook or undervalue, though, in his reign of John, he acknowledges their excellence.

KING JOHN.

Though you and all the kings of Chriſtendom
Are led ſo groſsly by this meddling prieſt,
Dreading the curſe that money may buy out,
And, by the merit of vile gold, droſs, duſt,
Purchaſe corrupted pardon of a man,
Who in that ſale ſells pardon from himſelf, &c.

From this and the former ſpeech of King John to the legate, many good Proteſtants, and, amongſt the reſt, Colley Cibber, have brought ample proofs to diſcredit the belief of Shakſpeare's being a Roman Catholic, which ſeems to have taken its riſe from the deſcription of purgatory by the ghoſt in

Hamlet. Shakſpeare's contempt of the fopperies and corruptions of Rome, may be found in more places of his works than this, and particularly in his Henry VIII.

In uttering the reſolute anſwer of John to the legate, Garrick's fire and ſpirit were conſpicuous; but, I think, from his deficiency of perſon, that it did not produce ſo ſtrong an effect as the dignified figure and weighty eloquence of Quin, or the energetic utterance of Moſſop.

AUSTRIA.

Well, ruffian, I muſt pocket up theſe wrongs,
Becauſe------

The perſon who acted Auſtria, on the revival of King John at Covent-Garden, in 1736, was one Boman, a dyer. This actor, in anſwering Falconbridge's repeated inſult of

Hang a calf-ſkin on thoſe recreant limbs,

whether through ignorance, haſte, or chance, inſtead of uttering the reply to Falconbridge as he ought,—with a loud vulgar tone, pronounced it thus:

Well, *ruffiun*, I muſt *pockut* up theſe wrongs,
Becauſe------

The audience did not obſerve the impropriety; but Walker, in the Baſtard, by changing the word *breeches* to *pockut*, imitated Boman's manner, look, action, and tone of voice, ſo archly and humourouſly, that he threw the audience into as merry a fit as ever Quick, or Parſons, or any actor, ever did, in the moſt comic ſituation: they were abſolutely convulſed with laughter for a minute or two, and gave ſuch loud applauſe to Walker, that poor Boman was thunderſtruck. In plain truth, Boman, though a jolly companion, a writer of Bacchanalian ſongs, the author of a play never acted, and a very honeſt man, was very deficient in the profeſſion of acting. He retired from the ſtage ſoon after, and filled the place of ſuperintendant to a brewhouſe with becoming dignity.

CHAPTER IV.

Prince Arthur's age aſcertained.—The Roman youth did not become warriors ſo early as the knights in the days of chivalry.—Arthur beſieges Queen Eleanor.—Battle of Mirabel.—John endeavours to win his nephew to his intereſt.—Scene between Hubert and the king, who tempts him to murder Arthur, compared to one in Maſſinger's Duke of Milan.—Colley Cibber's preſumption.—Aſtoniſhing power of ſound, from Dante's Inferno.—Mrs. Cibber's great excellence in Lady Conſtance.—The merits of Quin, Garrick, Moſſop, and Sheridan, in the celebrated ſcene between Hubert and John.—Strange inattention of an audience to a beautiful actreſs.

THOUGH it cannot be doubted that Shakſpeare had peruſed the chronicles of King John's reign, at leaſt thoſe of Hollingſhead, yet, in drawing his portrait of Arthur, he has cloſely followed the old play; in which, he is repreſented to be a child of about ten or eleven years old; this circumſtance, he knew, would make thoſe ſcenes, in which Arthur and Lady Conſtance are introduced, more pathetic and diſtreſsful. But the prince was, at this time, in the ſixteenth or ſeventeenth year of his age, and had given, before his captivity, many ſignal proofs of valour. Though the Roman youth did not aſſume the manly habit till the ſeventeenth year of their age, the noble ſpirit of chivalry inſpired her ſons with an earlier ardour for the field. It was not an uncommon ſight to behold a young knight at the age of fourteen,

teen, clad in complete armour, mounting his ſteed, and ruſhing to the battle. Prince Henry, ſon of Henry IV. fought bravely at the battle of Shrewſbury, when in the fifteenth year of his age; and, though wounded, refuſed to retire from the field. The ſame Prince Henry had been knighted by King Richard II. three years before, for the proofs he gave of his prowefs in Ireland.

Arthur had been knighted by Philip, and preſented by him with certain territories in the Poictevin, with the view of detaching him for ever from the intereſt of his uncle King John.

One of the young prince's firſt enterpriſes, after receiving this honour, was beſieging his grandmother Queen Eleanor in the town of Mirabel; the ſiege was ſo cloſely preſſed, that the Queen was obliged to retire into the caſtle; John, hearing of his mother's danger, haſtened with an army to her relief. An obſtinate battle was fought between the royaliſts and beſiegers, in which the king was victorious: Arthur and a great number of his followers were taken priſoners. John was ſo elated at this unexpected good fortune, that he wrote to his barons a particular and very exulting account of his ſucceſs, in terms not unlike thoſe we read of in a letter from a modern victorious monarch to his miniſters of ſtate, commanding them to give God thanks and rejoice at his ſucceſs. The king endeavoured, by all manner of ſoothing arts, to win over his nephew to his party, by ſetting forth to him the mighty advantages of his compliance; but the young inexperienced prince not only treated his uncle's offers of friendſhip with diſdain, but imprudently inſiſted upon his reſtoring to him the crown of England, which he had uſurped. And the writer of the old play puts into the mouth of Arthur, when he is requeſted by his uncle to depend upon him, ARTHUR.

Might hath prevailed, not right; for I
Am king of England, though you wear the diadem.

Upon this behaviour of Arthur, John confined him in the caſtle of Falaiſe.

KING.

See thou ſhake the bags of hoarding abbots.

In that play there is a ridiculous ſcene, where Falconbridge, in the rifling of a convent, calls upon a frier to open his cheſts and produce his treaſure: he obeys, and, in the unlocking of one of them, a moſt beautiful nun unexpectedly jumps out: ſhe promiſes to open another cheſt, where abundance of real treaſure was to be found; but, upon the unlocking of one, a luſty frier proves to be the promiſed gold. This farcical ſcene, which Shakſpeare has judiciouſly avoided, muſt have entertained the audience at a time when the Reformation was newly eſtabliſhed on the ruins of Popery.

I do not recollect a third act, in any tragedy of Shakſpeare, ſo rich in ſcenes, where pity and terror diſtreſs the ſoul of man, and govern it by turns with equal influence, as this of king John. The interview between John and Hubert, where the king ſolicits Hubert, more by looks and action than by words, to murder his nephew Arthur, is in the opinion of every man of taſte, ſuperior to all praiſe. A late editor of Maſſinger has indeed called upon the reader of a ſcene between Sforza and Franciſco, in the Duke of Milan, to compare it with this between John and Hubert, and boldly appeals to his judgment for the deciſion.

The ſcene in Maſſinger is well conceived and highly finiſhed; but the lightning itſelf is not brighter or quicker in its flaſh, nor more aſtoniſhing in its effects, than the ſublime and penetrating ſtrokes of Shakſpeare. In Maſſinger, eloquent language and unbroken periods give eaſy aſſiſtance to the ſpeaker, and calm and undiſturbed pleaſure to the hearer: In Shakſpeare, the abrupt hints, half-ſpoken meanings, heſitating pauſes, paſſionate interruptions, and guilty looks, require the utmoſt ſkill of the actors while they alarm and terrify the ſpectator.

From Colley Cibber's long experience, and perfect knowledge of the ſtage, we might have expected that he would have conſidered this ſcene as a ſacred thing, and have given conſequence to his Papal Tyranny by tranſcribing it whole and untouched. But Colley's confidence in his abilities was extreme; and he has not only mixed his cold crudities and proſaic offals with the rich food of Shakſpeare, but has preſumed to alter the œconomy of the ſcene by ſuperfluous incident: for John deſires Hubert to draw the curtain, that he may unfold his meaning to him in the dark; and Hubbert exacts an exculpatory warrant from him to put Arthur to death. In this latter management he has borrowed from Sforza a writing, ſigned by him, to warrant the putting Marcelia to death.

KING JOHN.

——If the midnight-bell
Did, with his iron tongue and brazen mouth,
Sound *one* unto the drowſy race of night.

Mr. Steevens, after having formerly eſpouſed the old reading of "Sound *on* unto," &c. very candidly doubts the ſtrength of his argument, and with greater probability ſuppoſes that *one* ſingle notice of a bell is more appoſite to the purpoſe of the king.

There is not, in all poetry, perhaps, a greater inſtance of the aſtoniſhing and ſublime effect of ſound, produced by a ſingle word, than in

Dante's Inferno. *Thn awful ſentence of the Judge, in the laſt great day,* ſays that author, *will ſound for ever in the ears of the damned**. This he expreſſes by **Rimbomba** *in Æternum.*

The ſeveral actors of John, in this ſcene, had their different and appropriated ſhares of merit. Quin's voice and manner of acting were well adapted to the ſituation and buſineſs of it. His ſolemn and articulate whiſperings were like ſoft notes in muſic, which ſummon our deepeſt attention; but, whether the action did not correſpond with the words, or the look did not aſſiſt the ſpeech and action, the effect was not perfectly produced. If ever Garrick's quick intelligence of eye and varied action failed him, it was here. Through the whole ſcene, his art was too viſible and glaring; his inclination and fear were not equally ſuſpended; the heſitations of a man big with murder and death were not happily and ſublimely expreſſed.

Of Moſſop, juſtice requires me to ſay, that he was nearer in feeling the throes of a guilty mind, and in conveying them to his auditors, than either Quin or Garrick. In my memoirs of Mr. Garrick, I have endeavoured, though faintly, to do juſtice to the ſkill of Mr. Sheridan, who, in this ſcene, bore away the palm from all competitors.

LADY CONSTANCE.

No! I defie all comfort! all redreſs!

The grief, anguiſh, and deſpair, of a mother, are no where ſo naturally conceived and ſo pathetically expreſſed, as in the Conſtance of Shakſpeare. The Clytemneſtra, Hecuba, and Andromache, of Euripides, though juſtly admired characters, have not thoſe affecting touches, thoſe heart-rending exclamations of maternal diſtreſs, with which

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* Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels. Matthew xxv. 41.

Conſtance melts the audience into tears. The modern imitations of the ancients are ſtill more feeble. Nor can Creuſa or Merope approach the ſublime pathos of our inimitable poet.

LADY CONSTANCE.

Oh amiable lovely death!

This noble apoſtrophe to death is ſuperior to that fine invocation of the chorus in the ſupplicants of Æſchylus to the ſame power.

> O thou, aſſigned the wretch's friend,
> To bid his miſeries end,
> And in oblivion's balm to ſteep his woe,
> Come, gentle death, ere that ſad hour
> Which drags me to the nuptial bed,
> And let me find, in thy ſoft power,
> A refuge from the force I dread.
>
> POTTER'S ÆSCHYLUS.

I have already taken notice of Mrs. Cibber's uncommon excellence in Conſtance. It was indeed her moſt perfect character. When going off the ſtage, in this ſcene, ſhe uttered the words,

O Lord! my boy!

with ſuch an emphatical ſcream of agony, as will never be forgotten by thoſe who heard her.

This admirable actreſs, during the repreſentation of this tragedy at Covent-Garden Theatre, about the year 1750, was ſuddenly taken ill. The play was, however announced in the bills. Mrs. Woffington, who was ever ready to ſhew her reſpect to the public and her willingneſs to promote the intereſt of her employer, came forward to the front of the pit, ready dreſſed for the character of Conſtance, and offered with the permiſſion of the audience, to ſupply Mrs. Cibber's place for that night. The ſpectators, inſtead of meeting her addreſs with approbation, ſeemed to be entirely loſt in ſurprize. This unexpected reception ſo embarraſſed her, that ſhe was preparing to retire; when Ryan, who thought they only wanted a hint to rouſe them from their inſenſibility, aſked them bluntly if they would give Mrs. Woffington leave to act Lady Conſtance? The audience, as if at once awakened from a fit of lethargy, by repeated plaudits ſtrove to make amends for their inattention to the moſt beautiful woman that ever adorned a theatre.

CHAPTER V.

Affecting interview of Hubert and Arthur.—Who firſt introduced the practice of burning out eyes in England.—Good effects of the Great Charter.—Humanity of an executioner.—Marlow, in the ſtory of John, nearer to hiſtory than Shakſpeare.—Hubert overcome by Arthur.—Marlow a competitor with Shakſpeare—Paſſage from Marlow.—Paſſions of the audience during the ſcene between Arthur and Hubert.—King John crowned four times.—Method of doing homage.—The king's apprehenſions.—Scene of recrimination.—The ſeveral actors of John compared.—Shakſpeare the poet of painters—Actors of Hubert's character deſcribed—Anecdote of Quin and Bridgwater.—Diſcuſſion of John's guilt reſpecting the death of Arthur.

THE interview between Arthur and Hubert, in the fourth act, involves a ſubject ſo terrible to the imagination, that it requires more than common ſkill and delicacy, in the writer, to treat it in ſuch a manner as neither to ſhock the reader, nor fill the ſpectator with horror. The cuſtom of putting out a perſon's eyes was unknown to our Britiſh, Saxon, and I believe, our Daniſh, anceſtors.

ceſtors. The cruel practice of burning out the eye was introduced by William the Conqueror. That royal ruffian, (I cannot afford him a ſofter name,) we are aſſured by hiſtorians, puniſhed the killing of a boar, a deer, or even a hare, in his own foreſts, (which were ſo widely extended that they contained almoſt a twelfth part of the kingdom,) with the loſs of the offender's eyes. The immediate ſucceſſors of this tyrant did not aboliſh this inhuman practice. The great charter, extorted from John by his barons, contributed to make man more placid and humane, as well as generous and free.

Shakſpeare has generally not only adhered to the plot of the old play, but has borrowed ſeveral ſentiments from it. We may ſafely truſt to the opinion of the accurate and induſtrious Mr. Malone, who ſuppoſes Marlow to have been the author; for the verſification of the old play reſembles his more than that of any other writer. He has certainly more cloſely followed hiſtory than Shakſpeare; but I am convinced that he alſo had read the ſame hiſtorian; for the ſpeech of the executioner, who declares himſelf well pleaſed to be abſent from the murder of Prince Arthur, is judiciouſly borrowed from a paſſage in Hollingſhead. John, having determined, for obvious reaſons, to put his nephew to death, tampered with certain perſons, whom he tempted by the hopes of reward, to execute his purpoſe. Some treated his propoſals with diſdain and horror: others endeavoured to accompliſh the deed. The cries and ſtruggles of the young prince brought Hubert to them; who, having diſmiſſed the ruffians, was prevailed upon, by the tears of the unhappy Arthur, to promiſe that he would ſave and protect him. In order to effect this, he gave out that he was dead; and, ſtill better to carry on the deceit, the burial ſervice was performed for him. Thus far the hiſtorian.

Notwithſtanding that our author, in this ſcene, unluckily falls into his old fond habit of quibbling and playing upon words, yet the ſtrong pleadings of Arthur, in the natural language of youthful innocence in diſtreſs, will touch the heart of every reader. To place Marlow as a competitor to Shakſpeare, would revolt the mind of any reader; yet, in this ſcene, he is no contemptible antagoniſt: the former is more affecting: the latter more eloquent. Some lines in Arthur's ſpeech to Hubert, after reading the warrant for his death, ought not to be loſt.

ARTHUR.

Heaven weeps, the ſaints do ſhed celeſtial tears;
They fear *thy fall*, and cite thee with remorſe:
They knock thy conſcience, moving pity there,
Willing to fence thee from the rage of hell:
Hell! Hubert! Truſt me, all the plagues of hell
Hang on the performance of this damned deed,
This ſeal, the warrant of the body's bliſs,
Inſureth Satan chieftain of thy ſoul.
Subſcribe not, Hubert! Give not God's part away!
I ſpeak not only for my eyes privilege,
The chief exterior that I would enjoy;
But for thy peril, far beyond my pain,
Thy ſweet ſoul's loſs, more than my eyes lack,
A cauſe internal and eternal too:
Adviſe thee, Hubert, for the caſe is hard
To loſe ſalvation for a king's reward.

Hubert not ſeeming to be moved, Arthur ſubmits, and bids him obey his orders; but ſtill endeavours to affect him with an imprecation.

Ye rolling eyes,* whoſe ſuperficies yet
I do behold with eyes that nature lent,
Send forth the terror of your mover's frown

To

* Orbs.

To wreak my wrongs upon my murderers,
That rob me of your fair reflecting view.
Let hell to them, as earth they wiſh to me,
Be dark and direful guerdon of their guilt!
Delay not, Hubert, my oriſons are ended;
Begin, I pray thee, reave me of my ſight:
But to perform a tragedie indeed,
Conclude the period with a mortal ſtab!

Colley Cibber has done leſs injury to Shakſpeare, in this ſcene, than in any other of the play. Nay, it muſt be confeſſed, he has heightened the anguiſh of Hubert by a very fine and affecting incident. This man, after giving a ſolemn promiſe to his royal maſter that he would put his nephew to death, inſtantly prepares to accompliſh the deed; but, as he is going about it, he overhears the prince putting up his prayers to heaven for him. To hear the innocent victim praying for his ſlaughterer ſtaggers his reſolution, and throws him into an agony.

Ha! what is that I hear!
Diſtraction to my ſenſe! He prays for me!
For Hubert! who has made his chains ſit eaſy!
And thanks high heaven he has ſo kind a keeper!
What means this damp reluctance on my brows?
Theſe trembling nerves? This ague in my blood?

It had been well if Cibber had ſtopt here: but he goes on to compare that which will bear no compariſon, the ſtab of the aſſaſſin with the wound which the brave man gives and receives in the field of battle. But let me not rob him of any juſt claim to merit. He puts a thought into the mouth of Arthur, which, though not unobvious, is exceedingly touching, from the ſituation of the character. Hubert enjoins Arthur to give, under his hand, a formal acknowledgment that his death was voluntary and inflicted by his own hand.

ARTHUR.

Muſt I do more than die! O mercy! mercy!

HUBERT.

Suppreſs thy voice, or thou art days in dying.

ARTHUR.

I will, O ſpare me, Hubert, but a moment!
But while I call once more on heaven. Indeed
I'll not be loud, *alas! I need not there!*
The ſofteſt ſupplicating ſigh is heard in heaven.

The paſſions of the audience, during this terrible ſcene, are ſuſpended between hope and fear, between apprehenſion of the prince's death and expectation of Hubert's remorſe. It is with pleaſure I have obſerved a thouſand melting eyes reſume their luſtre, when Hubert quits the bloody purpoſe and embraces the child.

The coronation of John follows.

Weak princes are ever ſuſpicious of the loyalty of their ſubjects; John, who was conſcious of his demerit, reſolved to fence himſelf with the vows and promiſes of his ſubjects, by their repeated oaths and acts of allegiance. In this, he manifeſted more confidence in the integrity of his people than he ought. For he who flagrantly violates his own moſt ſolemn adjuration when he is crowned, by which he binds himſelf to uphold the laws in their full force, and to maintain the rights of his people, emancipates them from their obligations. John was crowned no leſs than four times; once from the paltry ſpirit of revenge againſt Hubert, archbiſhop of Canterbury, whom he hoped to involve in conſiderable expence, by the archbiſhop's incurring the neceſſary charges attending the ceremony. But the great motive for theſe frequent coronations and other ſolemn aſſemblies was his receiving homage from his vaſſals, his barons, eccleſiaſtical and civil; which was performed in the following manner: ſeated upon his throne, in his royal robes, with his crown on his head, and ſurrounded by his ſpiritual and temporal nobles, the king beheld his greateſt prelates and moſt powerful barons, uncovered and unarmed, upon their knees. In that humble poſture, they put both their hands between his, and ſolemnly promiſed "To be his liegemen of life and limb, and worldly worſhip; to bear faith and truth to him, to live and die with him, againſt all manner of men."

By this ſacred promiſe, given before all the world, our monarchs imagined they could ſecure the fidelity and allegiance of thoſe whom they determined to injure, perſecute, and oppreſs.

The conduct of the plot, in the fourth act, and eſpecially that part of it which follows the diſcourſe upon the new coronation, is very judicious. The king's ſuppoſed ſecurity, ariſing from this oſtentatious piece of pageantry, is ſuddenly ſhaken to the foundation by the news of Arthur's death, and the ſtrong reproaches and conſequent deſertion of the barons thereupon. The landing of the French adds to the king's perplexity, which is not diminiſhed by the hermit's prophecy, 'That ere Aſcenſion-day he would give up his crown.' In all the diſtracted hurry of a man alarmed and terrified, John diſpatches Falconbridge after the lords to ſoothe them, if poſſible, and bring them to his preſence. Hubert, now left alone with the king, endeavours to magnify his apprehenſions by prodigies in the heavens, by prophecies, and by urging the univerſal diſcontent of the people, all owing to Arthur's death. This is artfully contrived to reconcile the king to Hubert's breaking his promiſe in ſaving the life of the young prince. The upbraidings of John,—who endeavours to apply balm to his own wounded conſcience by recrimination on the enormous guilt of his inſtrument, whom he deſcribes as an ugly monſter, formed by nature for acts of villany—Hubert's ſeizing the proper moment when the king's paſſion is at an ebb, and reſtoring his peace by a ſingle word, with an artful, though falſe, vindication of his own innocence—Theſe are ſuch paintings of the paſſions, and their operations, on the human mind, as no other writer, ancient or modern, I ſuppoſe, was acquainted with.

To enter into a long criticiſm upon the ſeveral merits of the actors who have repreſented the laſt maſterly ſcene between the king and Hubert would be tedious and unprofitable. It is not indeed loaded with difficulty, like the former, between the ſame perſons in the third act. There the paſſions were over-awed, and durſt not ſhew themſelves in full day, but ſought for a cover in nods and ſhrugs, fearful looks, disjointed phraſes, and broken ſentences: here they burſt out with the vehemence of a torrent, and Nature is permitted to ſpeak her own language with aſtoniſhing rapidity. Thoſe actors who were happy in the beſt-toned voices, if they had any ſkill, were ſure to excel. Delane and Moſſop wanted neither fire nor force to expreſs anger, rage, and reſentment, with truth and vigour. Sheridan and Quin, endowed with leſs power, were obliged to ſupply that requiſite by art. Here Garrick reigned triumphant: he was greatly ſuperior to them all. His action was more animated; and his quick tranſitions from one paſſion to another gave an excellent portrait of the turbulent and diſtracted mind of John. When Hubert ſhewed his warrant for the death of Arthur, ſaying to him, at the ſame time,

> Here is your hand and ſeal for what I did,

Garrick ſnatched the warrant from his hand; and, graſping it hard, in an agony of deſpair and horror, he threw his eyes to heaven, as if ſelf-convicted of murder, and ſtanding before the great Judge of the quick and dead to anſwer for the infringement of the divine command! Mr. Rumney, we are told by Dr. Potter, calls Æſchylus the poet of the painters: Shakſpeare has ſurely as juſt a title to that appellation as any poet, ancient or modern. The tragedy of King John would ſupply the fineſt materials for diſplaying the ſkill of our moſt eminent painters. The two ſcenes in the third and fourth act, between John and Hubert, merit the noble pencil of a Sir Joſhua Reynolds or a Weſt. My friend, Mr. Penny, has given the public ſome valuable paintings from Shakſpeare, and particularly an exact picture of the ſmith and the tailor, as deſcribed by Hubert.

> I ſaw a ſmith ſtand with his hammer thus,
> With eager haſte ſwallowing a tailor's news, &c.

Hubert is, by the poet, made a principal agent in the play, and requires no ſmall art in the acting. The ſeveral players whom I have ſeen in Hubert, Bridgwater, Berry, and Benſley, very ſkilfully diſplayed the various paſſions incidental to the part. Quin was ſo pleaſed with Bridgwater, (who followed at the ſame time the different trades of coal-ſeller and player,) that, upon going into the Green-room, after the ſcene in the fourth act, he took him by the hand and thanked him, telling him he was glad that he had drawn his attention from his coal-wharf to the ſtage; "for ſometimes, you know, Bridge, that, in the midſt of a ſcene, you are thinking of meaſuring out a buſhel of coals to ſome old crone, who you are fearful will never pay you for them."

Arthur's death, by a fall from the walls of Northampton-caſtle, follows the important ſcene of Hubert and Arthur. As the death of this young prince is made of great conſequence in the tragedy, it will not be an idle buſineſs to enter into a ſhort and impartial diſcuſſion of that ſhare of guilt which may be juſtly imputed to King John, for ſo atrocious an action as the murder of his nephew.

From the concurring teſtimony of hiſtorians who had the beſt opportunity to know the truth, it is paſt doubt that Arthur was either killed by an expreſs order of his uncle, or ſlain by the king's own hand. Hume, an hiſtorian not likely to take things upon truſt, and always a ready vindicator of royalty, charges the king himſelf with the perpetration of the bloody deed; with ſtabbing him, and then faſtening a ſtone to his body, and throwing it into the river Seine. The report of his dying by a fall from the walls of his priſon was, in all probability, ſpread by John and his agents; and Shakſpeare has laid hold of it as an hiſtorical incident beſt ſuited to his purpoſe.

All writers on this period report, that every body was ſtruck with horror at the inhuman deed; and that, from that moment, the king was deteſted, and his authority over his people and barons rendered very precarious. The world has ever loudly exclaimed againſt the wretched John, as the moſt execrable of men, for this murder. To be well aſſured that he merited the odium which fell upon him in conſequence of the action, we ought to inquire into that predicament in which the king and his nephew ſtood in relation to each other.

Although the feudal ſyſtem had admitted the right of inheritance by lineal deſcent in the greateſt part of Europe, it was not ſo eſtabliſhed in England. From the conqueſt of John, a period of one hundred and forty years, there had been no leſs than three ſucceſſions to the crown, without any regard to the right of repreſentation. John's title, as there was no law againſt him, was as good as Arthur's, and the will of King Richard in his favour rendered it ſtronger. Beſides, the people of England, having acknowledged John for their ſovereign, put an end to all farther doubts with reſpect to his validity of claim. Lady Conſtance and her ſon were ſo well ſatisfied with John's right to the throne of England, that they both reſided for ſome time in his court. The policy of Philip, king of France, who contrived to alarm the prince and his mother for their ſafety, cauſed them to leave England with terror, and to throw themſelves under his protection; and this, I believe, was the ruin of Arthur; for Philip had no other intention than to uſe him as an inſtrument in his hands to diſturb John. The young prince was now become the profeſſed rival of his uncle, a competitor for the crown of England, as well as a claimant of all the dominions which our kings at that time enjoyed in France.

Arthur, when taken priſoner at the battle of Mirabel, was ſo far from liſtening to the reaſonable advice of his uncle, who intreated him to forſake the king of France, and depend upon him, promiſing, at the ſame time, to protect him in his due rights to the utmoſt of his power, that he very imprudently and haughtily put the king to defiance; nay, it is recorded that he was ſo far tranſported by paſſion as to tell his uncle, "That, to the laſt moment of his life, he would never ceaſe ſeeking occaſion to be revenged of him*." Notwithſtanding all this provocation of Arthur, no man will be ſo daring or wicked as to juſtify his murder; but ſure the caſe will admit of conſiderable mitigation.

Queen Iſabel, who cauſed her huſband, Edward II. to endure a moſt painful and ſhocking death, may be juſtly charged with much greater aggravation of guilt. So may Henry IV. who depoſed, and ſtarved to death, his lawful ſovereign, Richard

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* Rapin, Life of John.

II. So may Richard III. who made away with his nephews, King Edward V. and Richard, duke of York, his brother: yet the clamour againſt theſe delinquents has not been ſo outrageous as that againſt King John. After all, we may with great probability, in this caſe, make the ſame obſervation as Livy did upon the murder of Cicero by Mark Antony: "That Cicero met with the ſame fate from Antony, which he would have inflicted upon him if he had fallen into his power*. Arthur's vehement expreſſion of anger and reſentment, when a priſoner to John, leaves no room to doubt that he would have gratified his revenge to the height, if his uncle had fallen into his hands.

A Dramatic Miſcellany will, I hope, permit ſuch an inveſtigation of fact as relates to a principal character. This, indeed, is one main point I have in view; and it ſeemed to me more neceſſary, as I believe John's infamous conduct through his whole reign has hitherto been the cauſe why the queſtion of Arthur's death has not been more nearly and impartially ſcrutinized.

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* Fragmentum Livii, tom. ult. ad fin.

CHAPTER VI.

The nobles revolt to Louis, Dauphin of France.—Falconbridge viewing the dead body of Arthur.—Variety of action exacted by Shakſpeare.—Beautiful image in a ſpeech of Falconbridge.—Remorſe explained.—Meaning of true defence, *and* Do not prove *me ſo.—Garrick, in look and action, inferior to Tom Walker.—Different deſcriptions of the Devil.—Hubert's character not ſo odious as repreſented in the play.—Noble imagery in a ſpeech of Falconbridge.—Meaning of* unowed intereſt.—*The raven's bone.—Meaning of the word* England.

THE remainder of the fourth act is employed by the poet to quicken the revolt of the peers and their junction with Louis the dauphin, who claims the kingdom in right of his wife on the failure of Arthur. The ſight of Arthur's dead body confirms the barons in their reſolution of joining their forces to the dauphin. Falconbridge, with his uſual intrepidity, pleads the cauſe of the king; but is ſtruck with aſtoniſhment when the dead body is expoſed to his view. His attitude of ſilent grief and ſurpriſe is well implied by Saliſbury's queſtions.

SALISBURY.

Sir Richard, what think you? Have you beheld,
Or have you read or heard? Or could you think?
Or do you almoſt think, although you ſee,
That you do ſee? Could thought without this object
Form ſuch another?

By theſe ſeveral interrogatories, which Falconbridge is in no haſte to anſwer, the reader will ſee what variety of action Shakſpeare exacts from the actors of his principal characters, and what opportunities he gives to the maſters of their profeſſion to diſplay their abilities. After a long pauſe, the noble paſſion of Falconbridge breaks forth, and he calls the deed by its proper name.

FALCONBRIDGE.

It is a damned and a bloody work.

SALISBURY.

This is the bloodieſt ſhame,
The wildeſt ſavagery, the vileſt ſtroke,
That ever wall-eye'd wrath or ſtaring rage
Preſented to the tears of ſoft remorſe.

This image is exceedingly beautiful: but the word *remorſe* does not, in this place, mean ſincere penitence for paſt crimes or raſh actions, but is a term, not unuſual with our author, to ſignify deep ſorrow or violent affliction, independently of remorſe ariſing from guilt. Hubert is charged with the murder of the Prince; Saliſbury draws his ſword upon him; and Hubert, ſtanding upon the defenſive, makes uſe of an expreſſion, the meaning of which I underſtand differently from Shakſpeare's beſt commentator, Dr. Johnſon.

HUBERT.

I would not have you, lord, forget yourſelf,
Nor tempt the danger of my true defence.

Dr. Johnſon interprets *true defence* honeſt defence, or defence in a good cauſe; and certainly the words will well admit of that ſenſe: but I am of opinion that, in guarding himſelf againſt this attempt upon his life, Hubert rather intended to bring the earl to a ſenſe of his danger, in attacking one who was well ſkilled in fighting, a brave man and a ſoldier, able to defend himſelf by art and ſtrength as well as courage. However, I am not wedded to my opinion.

SALISBURY.

Thou art a murderer.

HUBERT.

Do not prove me ſo.

"Do not make me a murderer, ſays Dr. Johnſon, by compelling me to kill you." I rather believe, "Do not prove me ſo," is as much as to ſay, Do not bring me to a trial, or to the proof of it; for the conſequence will be, that yourſelf will be found a ſlanderer and a liar. I believe the phraſe or expreſſion of "Do not prove me ſo" is to be found, in this ſenſe, in authors of Shakſpeare's age.

To prevent a farther fray, Falconbridge interpoſes between Saliſbury and Hubert; and, in this ſcene, Mr. Garrick, notwithſtanding his great power of action, (from the deficiency of perſon, amongſt men who were of a larger ſize than himſelf,) rendered the following animated ſpeech of Falconbridge unimportant and inefficient.

SALISBURY.

Stand by, or I ſhall gall you, Falconbridge.

FALCONBRIDGE.

You had better gall the Devil, Saliſbury.
If thou but frown on me, or ſtir thy foot,
Or teach thy haſty ſpleen to do me ſhame,
I'll ſtrike thee dead.———

When Walker uttered theſe words, he drew his ſword, threw himſelf into a noble attitude, ſternly knit his black brows, and gave a loud ſtamp with his foot; inſomuch that, pleaſed with the player's commanding look and vehement action, the audience confirmed the energy of his conceptions by their approbation of applauſe. Falconbridge, notwithſtanding his defence of Hubert, tells him, as ſoon as the lords are departed, that he ſuſpects him very grievouſly; and farther:

FALCONBRIDGE.

> There is not ſo ugly a fiend of hell,
> As thou ſhalt be, if thou didſt kill this child.

Mr. Steevens has a curious note on this paſſage, from a book printed in the reign of Henry VIII. where we are told that the deformity of the condemned, in the other world, is proportioned to the degrees of guilt in this. But it is from the conception of the ſpeaker that the character of a Devil's uglineſs is formed here. With ſome, one of the largeſt ſize, with branching horns, big ſaucer eyes, and a length of tail is the moſt deformed and odious. But the brave man defines his Devil by giving him a quantity of ſpite and malice, of which he ſuppoſes him to have a larger ſhare than his brother fiends. So one of Shakſpeare's characters, ſpeaking of his hatred to his enemy, ſays,

> I'll fight with him with all the malice
> Of an under-fiend.

Hubert's exculpation of himſelf renders his character odious. Not content with denying the commiſſion of the murder, which he might have honeſtly done, he ſays, in expreſs terms,

> If I, in act, conſent, or ſin of thought,
> Be guilty of the ſtealing that ſweet breath,
> Let hell want pains enough to torture me.

This is a repetition of his impudent affirmation to the king:

> Within this boſom never enter'd yet
> The dreadful motion of a murderous thought.

Shakſpeare has drawn this man, in oppoſition to all record, in a worſe light than he needed to have done. Colley Cibber, on the other hand, cauſes Falconbridge to ſtab Hubert, on the accuſation of the peers and the ſight of the dead body of Arthur, without farther inquiry into his guilt; and

Hubert, dying, owns the juſtice of his puniſhment; for, though he did not commit the murder, he declares that he once intended it.

The ſpeech of the Baſtard, which concludes the act, is full of that noble imagery peculiar to Shakſpeare, and was uttered by Garrick with great force.

I cannot think that Mr. Steveens has hit the ſenſe of *unowed* intereſt, in the lines that follow:

> ——————And England now is left
> To tug and ſcramble, and to part by the teeth
> The *unow'd* intereſt of proud ſwelling ſtate.

Unowed intereſt, ſays this commentator, is that which has no claimer to own it. But claimers there were, and enough.

By *England* I underſtand John, who is often ſo termed by himſelf, and the king of France, in the ſecond act. In this very ſpeech, Arthur, as rightful heir to the crown, is likewiſe called *England.*

> How eaſy doſt thou take all *England* up!

The king is now forced to fight and ſtruggle for that dominion which he formerly enjoyed, but which he does not now, in Shakſpeare's phraſe, *owe* or poſſeſs.

In the ſame ſenſe the word is uſed by Iago in Othello.

> ——————Not poppy nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowſy ſyrups of the Eaſt,
> Shall med'cine thee to that ſweet ſleep
> Which thou ow'dſt yeſterday.
>
> OTHELLO, Act III.

> ——————Vaſt confuſion waits,
> As doth a raven on a ſick-fallen beaſt,
> The imminent decay of wreſted pomp.

Ravens and other birds of prey are not only ſaid to hover about the carcaſes of dying animals, in order to feaſt upon them, but to attend the diſſection of deer for a certain morſel, which hunters uſed formerly to call *the raven's bone.*

The following paſſage is tranſcribed from Turberville's Book of hunting, page 135.

There is a little griſtle which is upon the ſpoon of the briſket, which we call the raven's bone, becauſe it is caſt up to the crows and ravens which attend hunters; and I have ſeen, in ſome places, a raven ſo accuſtomed to it, that ſhe would never fail to croak and cry for it all the while you were breaking up the deer, and would not depart till ſhe had it.

Wreſted pomp Dr. Johnſon explains by greatneſs obtained by violence. In a more correct writer, it would be ſo underſtood, but in Shakſpeare's broad and unconfined language, I believe, it is different. The imminent decay of wreſted royalty, is the ſpeedy deſtruction of a king whoſe power is wreſted from him by violence.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.

John's reſignation of his crown to the pope.—The conſequences of an interdict.—Interdict deſcribed.—The diſtreſs of King John.—He is obliged to reſign his crown a ſecond time.—His inſenſibility of diſgrace.—He refuſes to grant a charter of liberty.—The pope eſpouſes John's cauſe againſt Louis of France, who calls the reſignation of his crown voluntary.—Peter of Pomfret's prophecy accompliſhed.—He and his ſon executed.—The humour of Falconbridge expires with the diſgrace of John.—Saliſbury's noble reluctance.—King Philip and his ſon Louis obliged to undergo penance.—Reaſon why Shakſpeare avoided the ſubject of the Great Charter.—Garrick's dying ſcene of John.—Shakſpeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher, compared.—Remarkable quotation from The Troubleſome Reign of King John.—His character compared.—Why more odious than any other Engliſh monarch.—Conjecture concerning the original actors of King John,—particularly Hubert.—Mr. Smith's Falconbridge.

THE fifth act of this play opens with the moſt diſgraceful event which could poſſibly befall a crowned head and a great kingdom. A powerful monarch reſigning his crown and kingdom into the hands of an imperious prieſt, and becoming his vaſſal by holding his dominions from him, and paying him an annual tax, was a new and aſtoniſhing ſight to John's own ſubjects, and to all the world. Shakſpeare has connected this part of John's hiſtory with the death of Arthur, concerning whom the king interrogates Falconbridge after the reſignation; but, in fact, ten years had elapſed ſince the murder of Arthur. A ſeries of wicked and tyrannical actions had alienated the barons of the realm and bulk of the people from John: his quarrel with the pope had involved his ſubjects in all the miſeries of an interdict, a papal ordinance which deprived the prieſt of his functions, and the community of religious worſhip: the churches were ſhut up: neither baptiſm, marriage, nor burial, permitted, except in particular caſes and under certain reſtrictions. I give the reader the deſcription of it in the lines of Cibber, in his Papal Tyranny, which agrees pretty exactly with Hume's tranſcript of that anathema, and to the eternal ſhame of the man, called by himſelf the Servant of the Servants of God, who, in a mean ſtruggle with the king for the nomination to a biſhopric, deprived a whole kingdom of temporal and eternal happineſs, as far as it was in his power. Cibber's lines are not dignified with poetic numbers, but they ſufficiently expreſs the pope's malediction.

O never was a ſtate ſo terrible!
Now all the rites of holy function ceaſe!
Infants unſprinkled want their chriſtian names!
Lovers, in vain betrothed, reſume deſpair,
Nor find a prieſt to ſanctify their vows!
In vain the dying ſinner groans for pardon!
Even penitence, depriv'd of abſolution,
In all the agonies of fear, expires!
Nor after death has at his grave a prayer,
Or for his parted ſoul a requiem ſung.

John was now reduced to the laſt extremity, hated and deſerted by his ſubjects, threatened with an invaſion from France, his kingdom groaning under an interdict, himſelf excommunicated, and his ſubjects forbidden, under a curſe, to pay him obedience. In this miſerable ſtate his only refuge was ſubmiſſion to the pope's mercy; and this could only be obtained by giving up to him his crown and dignity. Shakſpeare ſeems to have ſhrunk from the deteſted ſubject: he knew the juſt repreſentation of ſuch an event would be ſhocking to an Engliſh audience, and therefore paſſes it over with as much celerity as poſſible.

John ſays, after delivering his crown into the legate's hands,

> Thus have I yielded up into your hand
> The circle of my glory.

PANDULPH.

> ——————Take again,
> From this my hand, as holding of the pope,
> Your ſovereign greatneſs and authority.

This ſhameful act, which rendered the king as contemptible in the eyes of the people as he had before made himſelf hateful to them, was performed with great ceremony, firſt at Dover, before an innumerable multitude of nobles, biſhops, officers of ſtate, and all ſorts of people. The contemptuous behaviour of the legate ſhocked all who were preſent, though no man had the boldneſs to reſent his inſolence, or check his pride, except the archbiſhop of Dublin, who alone ventured to incur the diſpleaſure of the Holy See, by giving vent to his honeſt indignation. But, as if the king and kingdom had not been ſufficiently humbled by this moſt abject act of John, ſome time after he was conſtrained to make another reſignation of his crown and kingdom to the pope, at Weſtminſter, before all the peers of the kingdom, eccleſiaſtical and civil. Here he ſigned another charter; which, to render it more authentic, was ſealed with gold, the firſt having been ſealed with wax only. This the king delivered into the hands of the legate, for the uſe of his maſter the pope.

KING JOHN.

> Our people quarrel with obedience.

King John, like all other arbitrary princes, calls the people's ſeeking redreſs, from oppreſſion and injuſtice, treaſon. Had he condeſcended to liſten to the voice of equity and reaſon, he need not have been reduced to the neceſſity of yielding his crown to the pope. But this prince, who never knew the art of gaining the affections of his ſubjects, when deſired by the barons to grant them a charter of equal laws, (ſuch as the people might juſtly claim, and he beſtow without diminiſhing his prerogative,) with a ſcornful ſmile, demanded why the barons did not alſo aſk for his dominions? what they deſired, he ſaid, is fooliſh and idle. Then, with an oath, he declared he would never grant them ſuch privileges as would make him a ſlave. The meaning of which was, that he inſiſted upon their being bound to obey him in every thing, and himſelf to be free from all manner of reſtraint. This conduct of John reduced the barons to the neceſſity of calling in Louis the dauphin to their aſſiſtance; as, in later times, the principal men of the kingdom invited the Prince of Orange to redreſs the errors of King James's government, and to eſtabliſh their liberties on a ſure foundation.

PANDULPH.

But, ſince you are a gentle convertite—

It is obſervable that, from the time of John's ſubmiſſion to Rome, the language of that court, reſpecting him, was greatly altered. He who had been painted, by the pope and his adherents, as an impious monſter, ſtained with the worſt of all vices, and more eſpecially with hereſy and diſobedience to the holy ſee, was now extolled to the ſkies as the beſt of men, and the moſt religious and pious of all princes.

The word *convertite* is ſo eaſily derived from *convert*, that Mr. Steevens needed not to have authenticated it from Marlow. It is no uncommon word with Shakſpeare himſelf: he puts it into the mouth of Jaques in As you like it, who wiſhes to converſe with a tyrant turned a penitent and a hermit; for, ſays he,

> ———Out of theſe *convertites*
> There is much matter to be heard and learn'd.

KING JOHN.

> Is this Aſcenſion-day? Did not the prophet
> Say, that, before Aſcenſion-day at noon,
> My crown I ſhould give off? Even ſo I have.
> I did ſuppoſe it ſhould be on conſtraint:
> But, Heaven be thank'd! it was but voluntary.

How not by conſtraint? Did he not reduce himſelf to the abſolute neceſſity of yielding up his crown? Was there any action leſs voluntary than this? But Shakſpeare, in drawing the picture of this prince, could not make him more brutal and abſurd than he really was. It appears from hiſtory, that, though all Engliſhmen long felt the ſhame and diſgrace of their king's meanneſs of ſoul, he himſelf was the firſt to forget it; and, though treated by the pope's legate like a beaten ſlave, he ſeemed to triumph, becauſe his crown was reſtored to him on any terms. But the tyrant's ridiculous joy was blended with an act of extreme cruelty: for, though Peter of Pomfret's prophecy was literally fulfilled in John's own opinion, yet this man of blood commanded that he, and his ſon, who was no-ways concerned in the promulgation of his father's prediction, ſhould both be taken out of priſon, where they had been long confined, and hanged, without any trial or farther proof; which unmerciful ſentence was immediately executed.

Such heavy diſgrace and dark melancholy hang over the gloomy tranſactions of John, that Shakſpeare cannot, even with the unremitting ſpirit of a Falconbridge, enliven the diſmal ſcene.

His ſpeech to John, beginning with

> ——Wherefore do you droop? Why look you ſad?
> Be great in act as you have been in thought, &c.

is full of that noble ardor with which the genius of Shakſpeare inſpires this favourite character. But it is obſervable, although Falconbridge retains his gallantry to the laſt, that, after the murder of Arthur and the reſignation of John, he drops his vein of humour: John himſelf, after his abject ſubmiſſion to the pope, becomes lifeleſs and deſponding.

In ſome of Shakſpeare's hiſtorical plays, the laſt act is not ſupported with the ſame vigour as thoſe which precede. King John is conſtantly ſupplied with dramatic fuel, which blazes brightly to the end. The ſcenes between Louis and Saliſbury, and Pandulph and Louis, are made important by intereſting buſineſs. The character of an Engliſh nobleman, reduced by the outrage of tyranny to draw his ſword againſt his ſovereign, diſplays a warm picture of patriotiſm, of gallantry, and tenderneſs. Louis, in contemning the threats of the cardinal, appears a man of courage and a politician.

DAUPHIN.

> And come you now to tell me John hath made
> His peace with Rome? What is that peace to me?

After John's ſubmiſſion to the pope, hiſtorians tell us that the legate threatened King Philip and his ſon Louis with excommunication if they did not reſign their pretenſions to, and immediately withdraw their forces from, England; for that kingdom, he ſaid, was now become a fief of the holy ſee. Notwithſtanding the ſpirited oppoſition of Louis and his father King Philip, they were obliged to ſubmit to the pope; who, not ſatisfied with this compliance, exacted a diſgraceful penance from them; and even with this laſt mortifying injunction of papal authority they were obliged to comply. Superſtition had, in thoſe days, a ſtrong hold on the minds of the people. Great was the awe of the prieſthood. Altars, relics, and miracles, ſuppoſed to be wrought at the ſhrine of St. Thomas-a-Becket, and other ſuch ſaints, were held in the greateſt veneration. They made an equal impreſſion on all ranks of people, and had more effect on their paſſions than law, reaſon, and humanity. It was, perhaps, well for mankind that ſuch was the power of bigotry and ſuperſtition. Let us ſuppoſe, for the ſake of argument, that our hard-hearted kings and their ſavage barons had been *eſprits forts*, or modern free-thinkers! what would have been the lot of the common people, who at that time, in all parts of Europe, were little better than ſlaves?

The ſudden entrance of Falconbridge is abrupt, and, with two or three lively ſtrictures upon French courage, has rather too much noiſe and parade; but his reproach to the Engliſh revolters is keen and ſarcaſtical.

BASTARD.

Their thimbles into armed gauntlets change;
Their neelds to lances ——

The word *neeld* is ſtill uſed by the common people in Shropſhire.

In the ſpeech of Saliſbury, in this act, and I think no where elſe through the play, does the author hint at the true cauſe of the great quarrel between John and his barons.

—— Such is the infection of the time,
That, for the health and phyſic of our right,

> We cannot deal but with the very hand
> Of ſtern injuſtice and confuſed wrong.

The murder of Arthur was not the cauſe of this conteſt; for the death of that young prince could not be a reaſonable pretence to diſſolve the bonds of allegiance between king and ſubject. The ſcene I am ſpeaking of, in order of time, was after the king had ſigned the Great Charter with his barons, and ſworn to maintain all its articles and covenants: his reſolution to break through his moſt ſolemn engagements, manifeſted by his invading the eſtates of his nobles, drove them into the arms of France.

Mr. Pennant, in his tour through Scotland, records an anecdote which will give my readers a juſt idea of the eſtimation in which John was held by his ſubjects. ". When the king was in his progreſs northwards, to lay waſte the lands of the nobility who had been the moſt active to compel him to ſign the Great Charter of Liberty, the inhabitants of Morpeth, as ſoon as he approached the place, (ſo odious had he rendered himſelf,) rather than give entertainment to him and his forces, ſet fire to their houſes, and conſumed the town to aſhes." Pennant's Tour to Scotland.

It may be aſked, perhaps, for what reaſon Shakſpeare did not embrace an occaſion ſo fairly given in the choice of the ſubject, to bring the great queſtion of liberty upon the ſtage, by introducing the grand diſpute between the king and the kingdom. The ſubject is glorious, and the pen of Shakſpeare would have adorned it. But the poet produced his King John in the days of prerogative, in an æra too, when prerogative was popular. It was at that remarkable period when the power of the crown was at its height, and at the ſame time the prince was beloved, nay adored, by the people: a people made happy by a wiſe and ſteady adminiſtration of government, under a renowned and univerſally-admired queen.

In a battle excurſion, John and Hubert prepare the reader, by the ſickneſs of the king, for the cloſe of the tragedy. Theſe ſhort ſcenes are of real importance, though often neglected by actors of ſome merit, becauſe not attended with expected applauſe. It was the great excellence of Garrick to hold in remembrance the character he played, through all its various ſtages. No ſituation of it whatever was neglected by him. By his extreme earneſtneſs to appear always what he ought to be, he rouſed the audience to a correſpondent approbation of his action. In this dialogue with Hubert, Garrick's look, walk, and ſpeech, confeſſed the man broken with inceſſant anxiety, and diſeaſed both in body and mind. Deſpair and death ſeemed to hover round him.

The diſcovery of Louis's treachery, by Melun, to Saliſbury and others, puts an end to the revolt of the Engliſh peers, who return to the king.

An emendation of Theobald, in a line ſpoken by Melun, deſerves notice. Inſtead of,

> Unthread the rude eye of rebellion,

he propoſes to read,

> Untread the rude way of rebellion.

Mr. Steevens juſtifies the old reading by a parallel paſſage in Lear, ſpoken by Regan to Gloſter.

> Threading dark-ey'd night.

And yet it muſt be confeſſed that Theobald's conjecture ſeems to be ſupported by a line of Saliſbury in this very ſcene:

> We will *untread* the *ſteps* of damned flight.

After all, Shakſpeare ſeems fond of introducing the word *eye* on many occaſions; as *the* eye *of death*, *he turned an* eye *of death upon me*, *my mind's* eye, &c. Unthread the rude eye of rebellion, may probably mean clearing the eye-ſight of rebellion from all film and extraneous matter, ſo that it may ſee the path to duty with perſpicuity.

The laſt Scene.

Shakſpeare has, in relating the death of the king, followed Caxton's Chronicle and the old play, though ſeveral hiſtorians attribute his demiſe to a violent fever, occaſioned by the loſs of all his baggage in the Lincoln marſhes, and his indiſcreet and greedy eating of peaches to quench his thirſt.* The poiſoning of John at Swinſted-abbey preſented to the poet's mind an intereſting ſcene of pity and terror. In this he has copied an idea of Marlow, if we ſuppoſe him to be the author of the old play.

KING JOHN.

Philip, ſome drink. Oh! for the frozen Alps,
To tumble on and cool this inward heat
That rageth as a furnace ſeven-fold hot.

Mr. Seward, in the preface to his edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, prefers the poiſoning of Alphonſo, in their play of A wife wife for a month, to Shakſpear's ſcene of King John.

The merit of that ſcene is great; but the authors have ſurely ſaid more than was neceſſary. It is true, their images correſpond with the ſubject, and their lines in general are worked up to great per-

* Speed, from various authors, charges the monks with poiſoning John; and quotes, in proof of it, a ſaying of Henry III. his ſon and ſucceſſor, to the abbot of Clerkenwell—"Mean you to turn me out of the kingdom, and afterwards to murder me, as my father was dealt with?"

perfection: but the ſituation would not admit of ſuch prolixity, or ſuch nice deſcriptions of heat and cold, with their ſeveral attributes. Shakſpeare knew human nature better than theſe his imitators and envious rivals. He knew where to ſtop. Their heads were at work, while his heart was buſy in its feelings.

One ſpeech of Alphonſo, in The Wife for a Month, and another from Shakſpeare's John, will perhaps convince the reader that I do not wrong the celebrated dramatic twins.

Wife for a Month.

ALPHONSO.

Give me more air, air, more air; blow, blow!
Open, thou eaſtern gate, and blow upon me!
Diſtil thy cold dews, O thou icy moon,
And, rivers, run through my afflicted ſpirit!
I am all fire, fire, fire! The raging dog-ſtar
Reigns in my blood! Oh! which way ſhall I turn me?
Ætna and all his flames burn in my head.
Fling me into the ocean, or I periſh.
Dig, dig, dig, till the ſprings fly up;
The cold, cold, ſprings, that I may leap into 'em,
And bathe my ſcorch'd limbs in their purling pleaſures.
Or ſhoot me up into the higher region,
Where treaſures of delicious ſnow are nouriſh'd,
And banquets of ſweet hail!

King John.

PRINCE HENRY.

How fares your majeſty?

JOHN.

Poiſon'd—ill fare! dead! forſook! caſt off!
And none of you will bid the winter come,
To thruſt his icy fingers in my maw;
Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their courſe
Through my burn'd boſom, nor intreat the North
To make his bleak winds kiſs my parched lips,
And comfort me with cold.

In this very intereſting ſituation theſe great ſcholars and poliſhed gentlemen make Alphonſo a ſatiriſt, a quibbler, and a toper; for what ſhall we ſay of his deſiring the frier to bring Charity to him, that he may hug her; "for they ſay ſhe's cold,"

> Infinite cold: devotion cannot warm her.

When he calls for drink, he wiſhes to have

> —All the worthy drunkards of the time,
> The experienc'd drunkards! Let me have them all,
> And let them drink their worſt: I'll make them idiots.

This is not language of a man in extreme pain: There is, in the old play, a ſpeech of John whilſt in his dying agony, written with no common power, in which the author diſplays the real character of John, and more agreeably to hiſtorical information than what we find in Shakſpeare himſelf; who, perhaps, from ſuperior judgment, threw into ſhade ſome of the worſt of his qualities. The lines are, I think, worth preſerving.

> Methinks I ſee a catalogue of ſin,
> Wrote by a fiend in marble characters;
> The leaſt enough to loſe my part in Heav'n.
> Methinks the devil whiſpers in mine ears,
> And tells me 'tis in vain to hope for grace.
> I muſt be damn'd for Arthur's ſudden death:
> I ſee, I ſee, a thouſand, thouſand, men
> Come to accuſe me for my wrongs on earth;
> And there is none ſo merciful a God
> That will forgive the number of my ſins.
> How have I liv'd but by another's loſs?
> What have I lov'd but wreck of others weal?
> Where have I vow'd, and not infring'd mine oath?
> Where have I done a deed deſerving well?
> How, what, when, where, have I beſtow'd a day
> That tended not to ſome notorious ill?
> My life, replete with rage and tyranny,
> Craves little pity for ſo ſtrange a death.
> Why did I 'ſcape the fury of the French,
> And dy'd not by the temper of their ſwords?

Shameleſs my life, and ſhamefully it ends;
Scorn'd by my foes, diſdained of my friends.

Black as this portrait is, and ſtained with various guilt, it does not comprehend all the odious qualities of John. Other princes have been unjuſt, perfidious, perjured, rapacious, and cruel; but ſome alloy of virtue, ſome noble endowments of the mind, contributed to reſcue them from utter abhorrence and contempt. John's evil qualities ſeemed to be unmixed with any good. His courage partook more of brutal violence than heroic gallantry. Equally unfit for the field and the cabinet, his meaſures for eſtabliſhing peace, or carrying on war, were ſo ill-concerted, that he brought infinite diſgrace and inevitable miſchief on himſelf and his ſubjects. Sir Walter Raleigh, in the preface to his Hiſtory, declares it to be his opinion, that, if all the pictures of the cruelleſt tyrants who ever reigned were loſt, and the true portrait of Henry VIII. preſerved, they would be all found in him. Sir Walter muſt have read the reign of King John very inattentively, or he would have better known where to beſtow the hateful preference. Henry had many accompliſhments and ſome virtues: John was deficient in all.

When the barons abſolutely forced him to renew the Great Charter, granted by Henry I. his great-grand-father, a wiſe and valiant prince; the anguiſh of John's mind, and his behaviour after ſwearing to perform what he had ſigned, are not eaſily to be deſcribed. Hollingſhead and Stow both aſſure us, that, on this occaſion, he *curſed the hour he was born, the mother that bore him, and the paps that gave him ſuck; wiſhing that he had received death by violence of ſword or knife, inſtead of natural nouriſhment. He whetted his teeth, and did bite firſt one ſtaff and then another, as he walked, amd oft broke the ſame into pieces; with ſuch diſordered behaviour and*

and furious geſture he uttered his grief, that the noblemen who were preſent well perceived the inclinations of his inward affections.

The great cauſe of his uneaſineſs ſheweth the depravity of his mind. By ſigning the Great Charter he was now become a king over freemen; whereas before he looked upon his ſubjects as ſlaves, and treated them as ſuch.

So brutal a character, as King John, Shakſpeare was forced to cleanſe and qualify, before he durſt expoſe it to public view.

Who were the original actors in this tragedy, it is now impoſſible to know. If conjecture were of any authority, I ſhould ſuppoſe that Burbage, who ſtands foremoſt, amongſt the comedians of that age, in the liſt of Shakſpeare's Johnſon's, and Beaumont and Fletcher's, principal characters, was the repreſenter of John. I ſhould give the Baſtard Falconbridge to Taylor, who was the original Hamlet, Iago, and Paris, in the Roman Actor: By the particular marks of a homely or rather ugly form, given to Hubert by the king, and not denied by himſelf, I ſhould ſuſpect ſome deformed Sandford* of that age played that part.

JOHN.

A fellow, by the hand of nature mark'd,
Quoted and ſigned to do a deed of ſhame.
—Taking note of thy abhorred aſpect, &c.

HUBERT.

—You have ſlandered nature in my form;
Which, howſoever rude exteriorly,
Is yet the cover of a fairer mind, &c.

The word *quoted*, occurs ſeveral times in Shakſpeare, and it is a playhouſe word. The characters who are to be called by the prompter's boy to be ready for the ſcene, are quoted by him in the margin of the play.

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* An actor much commended in Cibber's Apology.

I fancy, and it is only a fancy, that Ben Jonſon points at this actor in his Poetaſter, by the name of Æſop.

CAPTAIN TUCCA.

> Do not bring your Æſop, your politician,
> Uuleſs you can ram up his mouth with cloves
>
> POETASTER, Act III.

I ſhould not forget to ſpeak of Mr. Garrick's excellence in the dying ſcene of John. The agonies of a man expiring in a delirium were delineated with ſuch wonderful expreſſion in his countenance, that he impreſſed uncommon ſenſations, mixed with terror, on the admiring ſpectators, who could not refuſe the loudeſt tribute of applauſe to his inimitable action. Every word of the melancholy news, uttered by Falconbridge, ſeemed to touch the tender ſtrings of life, till they were quite broken, and he expired before the unwelcome tale was finiſhed.

On the late revival of this tragedy, I ſhould not forget that Mr. Smith exerted himſelf in the part of Falconbridge with much ſpirit and gallantry, and to the great ſatisfaction of the ſpectators.

To Cibber's vanity we owe the revival of this excellent tragedy, which had lain in obſcurity above one hundred and twenty years.

I think its worth has been rather underrated. Dr. Johnſon allows that it is varied with a pleaſing interchange of incidents and characters. In the order of Shakſpeare's tragedies, I ſhould place it immediately after Othello, Macbeth, Lear, Hamlet, Julius Cæſar, and Romeo and Juliet.

King Richard II.

CHAPTER VII.

Reign of Richard divided into three periods.—Richard II. *revived at Covent Garden, in* 1738.—*The play without a character of humour or pleaſantry.—Challenge of Hereford to Norfolk.—Their characters.—Honour of the gauntlet.—Richard obliquely accuſed of murdering his uncle Gloſter.—Truth the great doctrine of chivalry.—The lie given by Charles* V. *and retorted by Francis* I.—*Ceremony of Chivalry.—Ryan and Walker.—Lord Rea and Mr. Ramſay.—Explanation of* waxen coat.—*Conjecture concerning Richard's preventing the ſingle combat of Hereford and Norfolk.—Words* dear, *and* ſo far as to mine enemy, *explained.—Hereford's character and the king's—Converſation of Richard, Charles* II. *and Louis* XIV.—*Roger Aſcham's Account of Italy confirmed by Bayle.—Character of the Duke of Gloſter.—That of John of Gaunt.—Shakſpeare vindicated from the attack of David Hume.—Short account of Samuel Stephens.*

THE reign of Richard II. may be divided into three periods: the firſt conſiſted of that which is called, in our chronicles, the hurling times; when the inſurrection of the commons had nearly diſſolved all government: about the middle of this reign, the nobles annihilated the power of the crown, and uſurped the direction of the ſtate: towards the end, the court and miniſtry gained the aſcendant, and, by various acts of injuſtice and tyranny, the king was rendered extremely odious to his people; when ſuddenly a bold uſurper ſnatched the opportunity given him by the general diſcontent of the people, and mounted the throne without the leaſt oppoſition. The twenty-two years of Richard's government form a moſt intereſting period in the Engliſh hiſtory. I ſhall endeavour to compare the ſeveral characters as drawn by the maſterly hand of our poet with the authentic teſtimonies of hiſtory.

Though Shakſpeare has judiciouſly confined himſelf to the latter part of Richard's hiſtory, and to thoſe events which brought on his depoſition and murder; he has notwithſtanding made uſe of many happy hiſtorical incidents preceding that time, and drawn a variety of characters with ſtrength and veracity; yet, upon the whole, he has been leſs happy in this than moſt of his hiſtorical dramas. Though Mr. Steevens and Mr. Malone have, from the ſtationers books, placed this play to the year 1597, I am induced, from its many puerilities, to believe it was a much earlier production. This play was revived at Covent-Garden in the year 1738; and Haynes, the then printer of the Craftſman, was proſecuted in the court of King's Bench, for publiſhing a letter, in which were contained many ſtrong applications of ſeveral paſſages in it to the miniſtry, and particularly to Sir Robert Walpole.

Mr. Henley, afterwards Earl of Northington, then a very young barriſter, was retained in behalf of Haynes. Amongſt other matters, more material for the ſervice of his client, he obſerved, that Shakſpeare's Richard II. was inferior to moſt of his other tragedies: that, although many beautiful paſſages might be picked out of it, yet its blemiſhes were conſiderable: that it greatly abounded in quibble and play upon words; and this character is, I believe, not very different from that which Dr. Johnſon has given of it.

It is worth our obſervation, that Shakſpeare has, in this plea, deſerted his uſual cuſtom of introducing ſcenes of pleaſantry to contraſt with ſuch as are more ſevere and tragic. Not one gay character is to be found in the whole compoſition; and the only part of it which borders upon mirth is Richard's deſcription of Hereford's courting the loweſt claſs of the people.

Act I. Scene II.

BOLINGBROKE.

Now, Thomas Mowbray, do I turn to thee;
Thow art a traitor and a miſcreant.

MOWBRAY.

I do defie him and I ſpit at him;
Call him a ſlanderous coward and a villain.

The ground of this quarrel between the dukes of Hereford and Norfolk is no where aſcertained by our hiſtorians. It ſeems to have proceeded from an accidental converſation, which they fell into on the road as they travelled from Brentford to London. Amongſt other topics, the duke of Norfolk is ſaid to have made very free with the character of the king and his mode of government, charging him with arbitrary proceedings, and inſinuating that it was unſafe to live under ſuch an adminiſtration as the preſent.

Richard had indeed, according to Hollingſhead, ſo entirely ſubdued all thoſe he eſteemed his enemies, and was become ſo elated and ſo very arbitrary, that he threatened all men with death who ſhould preſume to oppoſe his royal will and pleaſure. The impreſſion which Norfolk's diſcourſe made on the duke of Hereford was in all probability very different from what the ſpeaker hoped and expected. The ambition of Hereford was regulated by conſummate prudence: his great abilities were as unqueſtionable as his high lineage. He knew that

Norfolk had been the king's principal inſtrument in all his bloody and tyrannical proceedings, and had been employed by him in the murder of the duke of Gloſter, his own and Richard's uncle: he therefore, in all probability, conſidered this confidential diſcourſe as a political train or engine of ſtate, to draw from him certain expreſſions which might be turned to his deſtruction: and it is not unlikely that Hereford, by the approbation of his father, John of Gaunt, determined to be beforehand with him, and accuſe him to the king.

BOLINGBROKE.

Pale trembling coward, there I throw my gage.

The glove was always employed as a gage or earneſt of challenging. Segar, in his Diſcourſe upon Honour, avers, *That he who loſeth his gauntlet in fight is more to be blamed than he who is diſarmed of his poulderon*: for the gauntlet armeth the hand, without which member no fight can be performed; and therefore that part of armour is commonly ſent in ſign of defiance.*

IDEM.

Further I ſay, and further will maintain,
That he did plot the duke of Gloſter's death,
Suggeſt his ſoon believing adverſaries.

That is, he raiſed the duke many enemies by his falſe inventions and baſe inſinuations.

IBID.

——————Like a traiterous coward,
Sluic'd out his innocent ſoul through ſtreams of blood,
Which blood, like ſacrificing Abel's, cries
To me for juſtice and rough chaſtiſement:
And by the glorious worth of my deſcent,
This arm ſhall do it, or this life be ſpent.

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* A part of the armour which guards the combatant's ſhoulder.

Hereford's bold declaration, to puniſh the man who put to death the duke of Gloſter, could not be pleaſing to the king, who knew himſelf guilty of that murder, by the agency of Norfolk and others. He ſaw evidently that he was himſelf ſtruck at by the challenge; and, in the whole ſcene, Shakſpeare has made him an encourager of Norfolk, whoſe ſpirits he endeavours to ſupport by a ſolemn proteſtation of his impartiality.

RICHARD.

He is our ſubject, Mowbray; ſo art thou.
Free ſpeech and fearleſs I to thee allow.

NORFOLK.

Then Bolingbroke, as low as to thy heart,
Through the falſe paſſage to thy throat, thou lieſt.

The nobleſt leſſon of chivalry was a ſtrict injunction to a conformity with truth. To this the knight was obliged by his oath to adhere inviolably. The giving the lie was therefore an ignominy which no man of that order could bear without the ſtrongeſt reſentment, and by giving or accepting a challenge. The point of honour, in reſpect to the lie direct, is ſtill maintained and preſerved, as a precious remnant of the inſtitution. Monarchs, however, can diſpenſe even with this; for, about one hundred and thirty years after this contention between Bolingbroke and Norfolk, Charles V. emperor of Germany, and Francis I. king of France, gave and returned the lie to each other, in terms as bitter and brutal as thoſe made uſe of by the two dukes; and, though the challenge was ſent and accepted, yet nothing came of it*.

NORFOLK.

For that my ſovereign liege was in my debt
Upon remainder of a dear account
Since laſt I went to France to fetch his queen.

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* Robertſon's Life of Charles V.

By *dear account* I underſtand a demand of debt of a private nature as ſtated in the text.

The appeal of Hereford and the anſwer of Norfolk are taken almoſt verbatim from Hollingſhead's Chronicle. The Parliamentary Hiſtory has omitted the charge of Norfolk's murdering the duke of Gloſter.

Scene III. The Liſts at Coventry.

When this play was revived at the theatre in Covent-garden, above forty years ſince, the ancient ceremony which belonged to the ſingle combat was very accurately obſerved, with all the decorations and arrangements proper to the appellant and reſpondent, the ſpectators and the judges. Amongſt the latter, the king was ſeated in a throne of ſtate. The combatants were dreſſed in complete armour. Two chairs, finely adorned, were placed on oppoſite ſides of the liſts: to theſe they retired after each of them had ſtood forth and ſpoken. Bolingbroke was acted by Ryan. Walker perſonated Mowbray. His helmet was laced ſo tightly under his chin, that, when he endeavoured to ſpeak, nobody could underſtand him; and this obſtacle occaſioned a laugh from the audience: however, this was ſoon removed, and the actor was heard with attention. In their perſons, dreſs, and demeanour, they preſented ſomething like an image of the old trial of right by duel.

The laſt attempt towards a trial of this kind, in the reign of Charles I. was attended with ſome ridiculous circumſtances, which may amuſe the reader. Lord Rea accuſed one Mr Ramſay of uttering ſome treaſonable expreſſions. Ramſay denied the charge, and challenged the accuſer to ſingle combat, according to the laws of chivalry. The king wiſhed not to revive this dangerous and obſolete cuſtom, and deſired the judges to uſe all legal methods to prevent the trial coming to an iſſue. Lord Rea, who ſeems to have had no ſtomach for the buſineſs, petitioned the Court of Honour, that he might be permitted to have counſel with him while in the liſts, and a ſurgeon with his ointments. He was allowed a ſeat or pavilion to reſt himſelf, and wine for refreſhments. He was permitted to have, beſides, *iron nails*, *a hammer*, *a file*, *ſciſſars*, *and bodkin*, *with thread and needle*. After a few adjournments, the king ſuperſeded his commiſſion to the conſtable and marſhal, and thus ended the laſt of theſe abſurd trials.*

BOLINGBROKE.

That it may enter Mowbray's waxen coat.

Mr. Steevens has, on this paſſage, given a curious deſcription of a coat of mail, from ſome which he had ſeen in the Tower. But, with ſubmiſſion to ſo accurate a writer, I beg leave to underſtand the words, *waxen coat*, in a very different ſenſe. By uſing theſe words, Bolingbroke means to expreſs a high and confident opinion of the goodneſs of his cauſe, of his own ſtrength and courage, and of the weakneſs and cowardice of his adverſary. As if he had ſaid, "So little do I fear the power of my antagoniſt, that his coat of mail will, to my lance, be as penetrable as if it were compoſed of wax." The knights who went forth to battle were certainly not better ſecured and guarded in their armour than thoſe who fought for life and honour in a ſingle combat. Hiſtorians have deſcribed the former as vulnerable only in the face when a knight lifted up the viſor of his helmet; in the ſide, at the extremity of the armour; when he was knocked ed down, after they had pulled off his coat of mail; or, in fine, under the arm-pit, when he lifted up his arm to ſtrike. Voltaire, from whoſe General Hiſtory I got this information, tells us that Philip Auguſtus, king of France, at the battle of Bouvines, was knocked off his horſe, and for a long time ſurrounded by the enemy; who gave him ſeveral blows, with various weapons, without his being in the leaſt wounded: ſo that a knight, compleatly armed, ſcarce ran any other riſk than being diſmounted.

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* Ruſhworth, vol. II.

Not one knight, continues this author, was killed in this battle except William Longchamp, who died of a blow levelled through the viſor of his helmet.

RICHARD.

Let them lay by their helmets and their ſpears,
And both retire back to their chairs again.

The hindering of this duel was eventually the cauſe of the king's depoſition and death; nor can it eaſily be conceived upon what principle of policy he acted. As Richard was not of a compaſſionate nature, the death of either, or of both, would not have hurt his feelings. In all probability, the plan of baniſhing both dukes was concerted between the king and his favourites, before the combatants entered the liſts at Coventry. The king could not bear the popularity of Hereford, whoſe eminent perſonal virtues were a conſtant reproach to his own imbecillity and worthleſſneſs. By baniſhing the duke of Norfolk for ever, he got into his own hands all the duke's patrimony, except one thouſand pounds *per annum* reſerved for his uſe when abroad. This unjuſt and impolitic ſentence, paſſed on the combatants, was confirmed by four and twenty commiſſioners ſelected from the upper and lower houſes of parliament, who were choſen to ſuperintend the combat.

KING RICHARD.

The dateleſs limit of thy dear exile.

The word *dear*, in Shakſpeare, has various meanings, and very often that which is quite oppoſite to the general ſenſe of the word. In this place it ſignifies, *fatal*, *terrible*, or *hateful*. So in Hamlet.

> Would I had met my *deareſt* foe in heaven
> Or ever I had ſeen that day, Horatio

I remember that Ryan was ſo afraid the audience ſhould miſtake Hamlet's meaning, that he always repeated the line thus:

> Would I had met my *direſt* foe in heaven.

BOLINGBROKE.

Norfolk, ſo far as to mine enemy.

The meaning of this addreſs, from one implacable foe an another, ſeems to be this —— "Norfolk, the buſineſs of the duel is over: however though I profeſs myſelf your enemy, let me now calmly intreat you, as a man and Chriſtian, to diſburthen your conſcience and confeſs your treaſon." The expreſſion is ſimply no more than, "So far as one enemy may ſpeak to another."

GAUNT.

> All places that the eye of heaven viſits
> Are, to a wiſe man, ports and happy havens.

Theſe lines are evidently borrowed from Ovid.

> Omne, viro forti, ſolum patria.

Soon after the deciſion at Coventry, the dukes of Hereford and Norfolk went into baniſhment. Upon reading over the paſſports of both theſe noblemen,

men, in Rymer, we ſee a ſtrong partiality of the king in thoſe granted to Norfolk, and eſpecially in that public act which is called, *De requeſtu regis ex parte ducis Norfolciæ*. Richard could not do leſs for the man who ſeems to have incurred his baniſhment principally for obeying his illegal orders, and one too whom he had robbed of the greateſt part of his eſtate. Norfolk died, ſome few years after his baniſhment, at Venice, univerſally hated.

RICHARD.

How he did ſeem to dive into their hearts,
With humble and familiar courteſy!

In giving this character of Bolingbroke, Richard is juſtified by the very words which Shakſpeare puts into the former's mouth when he was king.

Henry IV. act III. ſcene between Henry and the prince of Wales.

And then I ſtole all courteſy from heav'n,
And dreſt myſelf in ſuch humility,
That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
Loud ſhouts and ſalutations from their tongues,
Even in the preſence of the crowned king.

Henry then gives his ſon a very ſarcaſtic picture of Richard's behaviour.

The ſkipping king, he ambled up and down
With ſhallow jeſters and raſh bavin wits:
Soon kindled, and ſoon burnt, &c. &c.

Richard's familiar condeſcenſion was too general and too undiſtinguiſhing to be eſteemed of any worth. He delighted in mean company and licentious converſation. He bore no reſemblance to his father and grandfather, but was more like his unhappy great-grandfather Edward II. whom our old hiſtorians term a *chatterer*. Few men of

princely

princely rank underſtand the art of converſing with their inferiors in a manner that is gracefully condeſcending; and, for want of this, they often degrade themſelves in the opinion of thoſe whoſe eſteem and veneration they want the addreſs to acquire. Henry IV. of France, being exercifed in war and adverſity from his early youth, and perpetually mixing with all ranks of people, acquired ſuch an eaſy freedom of converſation and ſo happy a talent of expreſſion, that he endeared himſelf to his ſubjects as much by his affability as his great and illuſtrious actions. His two grandſons, our Charles II, and Louis XIV. were equally diſtinguiſhed for excellence in their different ſtyles of converſing. Charles, who loved company, and had none but men of wit conſtantly about him, was judged to be equal, if not ſuperior, to any of his companions, for the pertinency, as well as brilliancy, of his converſation: his grandfather Henry would ſometimes venture to give a rough, or even a coarſe, repartee; but Charles maintained his ſuperiority by never uttering any thing that could diſpleaſe, or occaſion an improper reply. His wit was that of the well-bred and accompliſhed gentleman. The grandeur of Louis's mind appeared in many ſudden effuſions of bons-mots. When a court-lady laughed at the Marſhal de Briſac, and loudly declared ſhe never ſaw ſo ugly a man in her life, Louis replied, "Madam, I differ from you very much; I think him a very handſome man, for to him I owe many glorious victories." When his grandſon Philip ſet out for Madrid to aſſume the government of Spain, "Remember, grandſon, ſaid Louis, there are now no Pyrenean mountains," the uſual boundary of France and Spain.

Act

Act II. Scene I.

YORK.

——Report of faſhions in proud Italy,
Whoſe manners ſtill our tardy apiſh nation
Limps after in baſe imitation.

Italy, in our author's time, gave the ton of faſhion, as France does now, to all Europe. The invectives of Roger Aſcham, who in nine days ſaw more wickedneſs committed in Italy than in ſeveral months in our great metropolis, are ridiculed, with ſome ſhew of reaſon, by Baretti: but when the ſame man aſſures us, from his own knowledge, that the Engliſh youth, who returned from their travels in that country to their own, were generally abandoned in principle and diſſolute in morals, I cannot help believing him; but what ſhall we ſay too if Bayle, in the article of Caſtellan, great almoner to Francis I. and who travelled to Rome ſome time before Roger Aſcham was in Italy, ſhould confirm all Aſcham had ſaid? Bayle gives the following extract from the life of that prelate by Gallandus." "I remember that when he was deſcribing the wanton luſts, avarice, and rapaciouſneſs, of the Roman pontiffs, and their contempt of religion; the pride, luxury, and lazineſs, of the cardinals; their riotous feaſtings, and other vices, which he had obſerved in the court of Rome; he would be ſo moved with indignation, that, not only the colour of his face, but the very motions and geſtures of his body, were changed." Bayle's Dict. Vol. II. p. 371. Lord Cheſterfield ſeems to have been more anxious concerning the morals of Mr. Stanhope when at Rome than in any other part of Europe.

GAUNT.

Againſt infection and the hand of war.

Dr. Johnſon thinks that, by *infection*, the author means that iſlanders were ſecure by ſituation from war and peſtilence: not ſurely from the latter, if they had any intercourſe by trade with foreign nations. In this rhapſodical deſcription of England by Gaunt, the poet means, I think, to include a particular and excluſive kind of moral happineſs. Though we are not exempted from warlike invaſions, we are ſecure from the contamination of ſuch ill habits and vices as are familiar to Italy and other parts of the continent. It is a remarkable obſervation of Machiavel, "That Italy, France, and Spain, are able to debauch the morals of all mankind beſide."

GAUNT.

A thouſand flatterers ſit within thy crown.

Thy ſole merit is having poſſeſſion of the crown; and that is the charm which attracts thy flatterers, who with their allurements deceive thee to thy ruin.

RICHARD.

Thou a lunatic lean-witted fool, &c.

The ſcene between the dying Gaunt and the king is not borrowed from any chronicle, it is the author's own invention; this great maſter of Nature takes advantage from Gaunt's recent injury in the baniſhment of his ſon and his own deſperate ſickneſs, to give a keenneſs to his reproaches which no man in a ſedate and unruffled hour of health would have ventured to utter.

GAUNT.

My brother Gloſter, plain well-ſpeaking man,
May be a precedent and witneſs good,
That thou reſpect'ſt not ſpilling Edward's blood.

As the death of the duke of Gloſter was eventually the cauſe of Richard's misfortune more than any thing elſe, I ſhall be indulged in ſpeaking a little more at large concerning the quarrel between Richard and the duke, which ended ſo fatally to them both. Shakſpeare, by calling Gloſter a plain-ſpoken man, ſeems to glance at the very words, which occaſioned, perhaps more than any overt act, the reſolution of the king to get rid of him at all events.

Richard had been prevailed upon, for a ſmall ſum of money, to reſtore the town of Breſt to the duke of Bretagne. The ſurrendering a ſea-port of ſuch conſequence to the French was generally blamed. The duke of Gloſter was ſo particularly diſpleaſed, that he reproached his nephew for it in very bitter and taunting terms—"It would become you better, ſir, to gain ſome important place by your proweſs, ſaid Gloſter, than to ſurrender to your enemies that which had been ſubdued by the victorious arms of your anceſtors." The king, ſays Hollingſhead, bade his uncle repeat what he had ſaid. This he complied with, and did not, in the repetition, ſoften a word which he had ſpoken before.

After all, the duke was certainly a moſt ambitious and turbulent man, whom no honours, power, or riches, could gratify. His courage in the field, and readineſs to promote any warlike enterpriſe, had rendered him exceedingly popular, and the idol of all military men. By this influence he had, nine years before his death, cauſed ſeveral of the king's miniſters to be publicly executed, and reduced the power of the crown to a mere ſhadow. The inſignificant character of Richard, who was neither a ſoldier nor a politician, gave this conſequence to Gloſter; whoſe temper was ſo brutal and inflexible that he refuſed to ſpare the life of Sir Simon Burley, though Richard's queen, called *the good queen Anne*, ſolicited this favour ſeveral

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hours on her knees. Burley had been tutor to the king, and was in high credit with Edward III. and his ſon the Black Prince. In ſhort, Richard was in the ſame ſituation, reſpecting the duke of Gloſter, as Henry III. of France was with the duke of Guiſe; who was reduced to the neceſſity of aſſaſſinating a man who was become too powerful to be brought to a trial. But, in both caſes, the imbecillity of the monarch brought on the neceſſity.

GAUNT.

And thy unkindneſs be like crooked age,
To crop at once a too-long-wither'd flower.

Dr. Johnſon, not liking the word *age* in the text, propoſes *edge* in its ſtead: and Mr. Steevens beſtows a very ingenious note on the figure of Time with a ſcythe. I cannot help thinking that the meaning of the text, as it ſtands, is very clear — "Do thou forget all proximity of blood, and become a confederate with my preſent ſickneſs and the *many infirmities of old ege*, to deprive me at once of life."

NORTHUMBERLAND.

My liege old Gaunt commends him to you.

There is a ſplendid ray of greatneſs, tranſmitted from hiſtory and tradition, ſtill ſurrounding the name of John of Gaunt, and which to this day commands a kind of awe and reverence. If we examine impartially the character of the duke, we ſhall find that it but ill correſponds with that celebrity which has attended his memory. I read of no military exploits of Gaunt which could exalt him either to the title of great conqueror or brave ſoldier. Unlike his father Edward III. or his brother the Black Prince, he ſeems to have been rather a cautious than an enterpriſing warrior; and, though no coward, yet he thought, with Falſtaff, that diſcretion was no mean part of valour. The boundleſs ambition which impelled him to ſtruggle for the crown of Caſtile, and the title of king, which he carried with him to his grave, did not contribute to make him a better ſubject. He was the great ſcourge and perſecutor of the commons, whom he laboured to reduce to a ſtate of ſlavery. He thought, with Dr. Mandeville, that teaching the children of the poor to write and read would be the means of rendering them unfit for ſervice; and therefore inſiſted, with the reſt of his brother tyrants, the barons, *that no poor man's ſon ſhould be permitted to have any inſtruction by going to ſchool.* I cannot have a doubt that it was chiefly by his advice Richard was perſuaded, when young, to pronounce that moſt diſguſting and ſhocking anſwer to the petition of the commons, who prayed to be relieved from vaſſalage, "*That ſlaves they were, and ſlaves they ſhould remain.*"

If he merited the honour of favouring Wickliffe and his doctrine, we can ſcarce attribute this conduct to generous motives; he hated the clergy becauſe they were rich and powerful. But no part of his conduct is more liable to cenſure than his neglect of his nephew's education, whom he ſeems, for no good purpoſe, to have ſuffered to become the companion of young men whoſe manners were diſſolute and utterly unfit to train him in that diſcipline which is neceſſary to form a great prince. The duke of Lancaſter was publicly accuſed of laying a plot to murder the king and uſurp the crown. The accuſer was put into the cuſtody of Sir John Holland, but he was found dead in his chamber the very night preceding the day on which he was to appear and make good his charge. Stowe's account of this tranſaction bears hard, I think, upon the duke.

The ſcene between Richard and Gaunt, on the revival of this play, was acted with ſuch propriety, as gained the approbation of the audience. Mr. Johnſon, commonly called *tall Johnſon*, being near ſeven feet high, the ſon-in-law of Aaron Hill, and by him inſtructed, was properly enough pitched upon to repreſent John of Gaunt: though his conception was not equal to the animated dialogue of the character, or his feeling powerful enough for the ſituation of it, his good underſtanding and decent deportment rendered him not diſagreeable to the ſpectators. In this ſcene too, Delane, in Richard, drew a good portrait of a king elated by pride and proſperity, and poſſeſſed with an obſtinate and unfeeling diſpoſition.

YORK.

I am the laſt of noble Edward's ſons,
Of whom thy father, prince of Wales, was firſt;
His face thou haſt, for even ſo look'd he,
Accompliſh'd with the number of thy years.

This reſemblance of Richard to his father appears pleaſing in poetical deſcription; but in fact, though very handſome, the king was ſo unlike the Black Prince, that it was inſinuated, from that circumſtance and his apparent degeneracy, that he really was not his ſon. If his picture, ſays the Hon. D. Barrington, in his Obſervations on the ſtatutes, which hangs over the pulpit in Weſtminſter-abbey, be an original, he certainly had not the complexion of his father. He proceeds to obſerve, that the reſemblance in point of features and complexion is more to be relied on, in proof of legitimacy, than any hereditary qualities of the mind.

IDEM.

Take Hereford's rights away, and take from time
His charters and his cuſtomary rights.
Let not to-morrow then enſue to-day.
Be not thyſelf; for how art thou a king? &c.

David Hume, who ſeems to eſtimate Shakſpeare's beauties by his blemiſhes, aſſerts,* that, in all his hiſtorical plays, there is ſcarce any mention of civil liberty.

Suppoſe this ſhould be granted; in how many plays, ſince the reſtoration to this day, do we find the ſubject of civil rights either generally diſcuſſed or occaſionally inſiſted upon? In how many dramas of the Greek tragedians is it profeſſedly or accidentally introduced? Tragedy owes its riſe to the paſſions; and though it may involve, as it ought, a topic in which all mankind are intimately concerned, yet by experience we find thoſe plays, which are moſt fraught with ſentiments in favour of public liberty, are leaſt admired and followed. How often is Cato acted? What is become of Dennis's Liberty aſſerted? But Hume wanted to prove, from Shakſpeare, that, in the reign of Elizabeth, the common rights of ſubjects were no object of public diſcuſſion. But is not the ſcene between Richard and York more intereſting to an audience than all the laboured arguments of political oratory? A counſellor of ſtate honeſtly tells his prince, that depriving a ſubject of his charters and cuſtomary dues was not only an act of oppreſſion and injuſtice, but a groſs ſoleciſm: it was undermining the throne on which he ſat, and contradicting his own right of ſucceſſion to the crown!

But York, in the following impaſſioned lines, goes farther:

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* Vide Hume's Hiſt. 8vo, vol. VI. p. 192.

> If you do wrongfully ſeize Hereford's rights,
> You pluck a thouſand dangers on your head,
> You loſe a thouſand well-diſpoſed hearts, &c.

Here the ſubject tells his prince, that, if he perſiſts in his reſolution to act with violence and injuſtice, the conſequence will be the hatred of his people and a civil war. Warm expoſtulations of this kind are of the very eſſence of tragic dialogue; but a train of ſentiments upon civil liberty is fitter for a diſcourſe than a play. Shakſpeare, though a court poet, has written more ſcenes to expoſe the tyranny and oppreſſion of kings, the pride and rebellion of the nobles, and the turbulent diſpoſition of the common people, than all the writers of plays put together.

In the hiſtory of the ſtage there is ſcarce any thing more ſingular than the fortune of that perſon who acted the part of York. This was one Mr. Samuel Stephens, a button-maker, in Paternoſter-row. He had been many years a conſtant attendant at the theatre, and eſpecially when Booth acted a principal part in tragedy. Amongſt his acquaintance he had frequently repeated ſpeeches, or favourite portions of plays, eſpecially from Othello. He was told by his friends that his voice reſembled that of Booth, both in ſtrength and melody; and that his imitation of that great actor's manner was juſt, as well as pleaſing. He was at length tempted to make an offer of his abilities to Mr. Rich, who had juſt loſt his great tragedian Mr. Quin, who had left him to engage at Drury-lane-theatre. In conſequence of ſome temporary agreement, Stephens ventured, in October, 1734, to act his favourite character of Othello. His figure was not unſuitable to the part: his voice was ſtrong; and he had, by cloſe auricular attention, acquired ſome of Booth's happy cadences. The ſpectators were equally ſurpriſed and delighted.

During that moſt paſſionate ſcene between the Moor and Iago, in the third act, the pit cried out, "Bravo! bravo! *better than Quin! better than Quin!*" For ſix or ſeven ſucceſſive nights this man drew after him large audiences. Quin, for a time, it is ſaid, avoided going to the coffee-houſes he uſually frequented, leſt he ſhould be affronted with the loud praiſes of the button-maker.

However, the charm was not wound up ſo powerfully as to laſt long. Rich, either by miſtake or deſign, perſuaded the new actor to chooſe Polydore, in the Orphan, for his ſecond character: than which nothing could have been more ill-adviſed. Stephens was in form, bulky; in the management of his perſon, aukward; and advanced to near his fortieth year. This act of indiſcretion was equally hurtful to the actor and manager. The ladies more eſpecially were diſpleaſed with ſuch a miſrepreſentation of a young gay libertine, dreſſed in a large full-bottomed wig, and, I believe, in red ſtockings, though they had long been laid aſide by the politer part of the town: but Ryan's predilection for that colour, it is ſaid, kept them too long on the ſtage. However, the audience did not forget the pleaſure Stephens had afforded them in Othello: they forebore on that account, ſhewing any marks of diſpleaſure to his Polydore, To recover the good opinion of the public, he was forced to hide himſelf in his black viſor. Stephens acted ſeveral characters, and particularly the duke of York, with approbation; but as he never came up to his firſt attempt, he gradually fell in the public eſteem. He ended at laſt in an itinerant actor. His laſt ſtage was Bath; where he died, about twenty years ſince, reſpected for his general good behaviour.

CHAPTER VIII.

Richard goes to Ireland.—Scene of Northumberland, &c. applied to modern politics.—War with Spain diſliked by Sir Robert Walpole.—His dread of Jacobites, and dying prognoſtication.—Particular lines of Shakſpeare vehemently applauded on account of ſuppoſed reſemblance.—Richard marries an infant.—His great indiſcretion.—Meaning of deſpiſed arms.—*Why Prince Edward was called the Black Prince.—York's character.—Shakſpeare's conduct of his plot.—Reſemblance between Richard and Agamemnon.—Delane's Richard.—Who was the firſt anointed king in Europe.—Feigned ſubmiſſion of Hereford, and treachery of Northumberland.—Savage manners of our anceſtors.—Fifty challenges in parliament.—Biſhop of Carliſle's integrity.—Warburton makes Shakſpeare a Whig.—Paſſive obedience.—Tom Chapman's abſurdities and real merit.—Farquhar, Rowe, Sir Godfrey Kneller, and Hogarth.*

AS ſoon as Richard, intent upon his Iriſh expedition, had left the ſtage, the author introduces a political ſcene between the earl of Northumberland and the lords Willoughby and Roſs, full of ſevere reflections upon the king's miſconduct. The writing is not ſingularly good, but it was greatly diſtinguiſhed by the particular behaviour of the audience, on the revival of this play, who applied almoſt every line that was ſpoken to the occurrences of the time, and to the meaſures and character of the miniſtry.

During a long peace of twenty-five years, the people, who ſeldom know their own happineſs, were eager for a war with Spain. Provocations, it muſt be owned, had been given by the court of Madrid. The depredations committed by the

Spaniſh guard-da-coſtas on our merchant-ſhips rouſed the attention and reſentment of the merchants, who addreſſed the parliament on the occaſion; and the amiable Mr. Glover, then a member of parliament, ſeconded their petition with an animated ſpeech. Sir Robert Walpole dreaded the conſequences of a war with the Spaniards, and feared it would unite the elder branch of the houſe of Bourbon in the ſame quarrel. He foreſaw too that a rebellion in Scotland would be fomented by the high Tories and Jacobites in both kingdoms. He had always entertained a ſecret dread of thoſe gentlemen, who aſſembled in clubs to toaſt the king over the water. Nay, ſome time before his death, which happened in 1744, this great miniſter, as I was then informed by a nobleman, predicted that the king would be reduced to the neceſſity of fighting for his crown.

The more reluctant Walpole appeared to ſecond the wiſhes of the merchants in commencing hoſtilities, the more clamorous the people were for letting looſe the vengeance of the nation againſt the Spaniards. When this tragedy was, after being long forgotten, revived, the cry for war was at the higheſt, and the ſpectators were ready to apply all that was uttered in the theatre to the tranſactions of the day and to the miniſtry. The dialogue of Northumberland and his friends furniſhed ample materials for political innuendo and application. There was in Bridgewater, who perſonated Northumberland, a moſt grave and ſolemn manner of delivering a ſentiment, which dwelt fully upon the attentive hearer. When he pronounced the following words,

The king is not himſelf, but baſely led
By flatterers,—

the noiſe from the clapping of hands and clattering of ſticks was loud and boiſterous. And when Roſs ſaid,

> The earl of Wiltſhire hath the ſtate in farm.—

it was immediately applied to Walpole, with the loudeſt ſhouts and huzzas I ever heard. Likewiſe the following obſervation of Northumberland, that the king's revenue was not diminiſhed by war, was met, by the audience, with redoubled ſhouts—

> War hath not waſted it; for warr'd he hath not.
> More hath he ſpent in peace than they * in war.

The two following remarkable lines, ſpoken by Willoughby and Northumberland, were heard with a dead and reſpectful ſilence:—

WILLOUGHBY.

> The king's grown bankrupt, like a broken man.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

> Reproach and diſſolution, hangeth over him.

And now, if Mr. Hume had read over this ſcene with attention, he would not have charged Shakſpeare with deſerting the civil rights of mankind: for what are the accuſations of the ſpeakers, in this dialogue, but ſo many vindications of the natural and legal claims of the ſubject?

Act II. Scene II. The queen, Buſhy, &c.

BUSHY.

> Madam, your majeſty is much too ſad.

Though Shakſpeare thought it for his purpoſe to have a queen in his tragedy, to heighten the diſtreſs of the ſcene, it is certain that Richard, about a year before he was dethroned, married a daughter of France,

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s anceſtors.

France, a child of eight years old: a moſt imprudent action, and correſpondent with the reſt of his conduct. He had no iſſue by his firſt wiſe, queen Anne; and therefore ſhould, in right policy, have married one who could have brought him children. By wedding a child, he deprived himſelf of the hopes of one great advantage and ſupport, at leaſt for a conſiderable time. William III. when the parliament obliged him to diſmiſs his Walloon guards, reſented the affront in a moſt lively manner, and not without tears. In the bitterneſs of his heart he ſwore, that, if he had had a ſon, he would not have complied with their requeſt.*

Scene III.

YORK.

Frighting her pale-fac'd villages with war
And oſtentation of deſpiſed arms.

Deſpiſed, in this place, means *deteſted*, *abborred*, &c.

IDEM.

Were I but now the Lord of ſuch hot youth
As when brave Gaunt, thy father, and myſelf.
Reſcu'd the Black Prince, that young Mars of men, &c.

This calls to our minds ſeveral paſſages of the Iliad, where old Neſtor vaunts, in moſt exulting terms, of his great proweſs in his younger years. The renowned prince of Wales, eldeſt ſon of Edward III. was called the Black Prince from his complexion, not his armour, as is generally ſuppoſed.

YORK.

Well, well, I ſee the iſſue of theſe arms.

The character of York, as delivered down by hiſtorians, is not much to his advantage: he was eſteemed a light and capricious man. Shakſpeare, in this ſcene, though not in all the reſt, conforms to the hiſtorical outline of the duke. In this interview with Bolingbroke, he firſt threatens, that, if he had power, he would attach the inſurgents; then ſays, he will remain neuter. After that, he invites the heads of the conſpiracy into his caſtle; and upon Lancaſter's telling him that he muſt go with him to ſeize the king's miniſters in Briſtol-caſtle, he calmly ſays, "It may be; I will go with you:" and yet the good man declares, "he is loth to break his country's laws:" but immediately after complies with the uſurper, who makes him a chief inſtrument to ſupport his rebellion.

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* Dalrymple's Memoirs.

Act III. Scene the king, Aumerle, biſhop of Carliſle, &c.

The following lines bear a ſtrong reſemblance to Agamemnon's ſaluting his country's ſoil, and ſhedding tears for joy, in Homer's Odyſſey, book IV.

RICHARD.

Dear earth, I do ſalute thee with my hand:
As a long parted mother with her child
Plays fondly with her tears, and ſmiles in meeting,
So weeping, ſmiling, greet I thee, O earth,
And do thee favour with my royal hands.

Η τοι ὁ μεν χαιρων επεβησετο πατριδος αιης,
Και κυνει απτομενος ἡν πατριδα᾽ πολλα δ᾽ απ᾽ αυτου
Δακρυα θερμα χεοντ᾽ επει ασπασιως ιδε γαιαν.

Well pleas'd, the king beheld his Argive ſoil,
And, leaping eagerly upon the ſtrand,
With tears of joy he kiſs'd his native land.

When Philip II. huſband to Queen Mary, firſt landed in England, he knelt down on the ground, and as he roſe he drew his ſword, as if reſolving to conquer the kingdom.

Shakſpeare has not, I believe, manifeſted more ſkill in the conduct of his plot than in this ſcene. The king lands from Ireland with a very few followers: his confidence is equal to his ignorance of his ſituation. He vents his complaints of rebellion in an affecting addreſs to the Engliſh earth, and without any apparent hopes of withſtanding a powerful invader of his kingdom, he idly preſumes, upon the ſacredneſs of his perſon, that he ſhall conquer all oppoſition. The author gradually leads him from confidence to doubt, from doubt to fear, and from that to deſpondency. Every incident is managed with the niceſt ſkill. Saliſbury alarms him, and Scrope terrifies him into abſolute deſpair. Richard's pathetic reflections on the miſerable fate of kings has been juſtly admired, and was marked by Pope in his edition as a maſterly paſſage.

Delane, who on the revival of this play acted Richard, though he did great juſtice to ſeveral ſcenes of the character, could not exhibit the tender feelings of the king's diſtreſsful ſituation. His voice was too loudly extended for the deſponding and almoſt effeminate grief of this unhappy prince. Had Barry ever been called upon to repreſent this part, "he would (in our author's emphatic language) have drowned the ſtage with tears."

RICHARD.

Not all the water in the rough rude ſea
Can waſh the balm from an anointed king.

One would imagine that monarchs have been taught to believe that the anointing them with the ſacred oil at their coronation was to operate like a miraculous charm, which was to render their perſons ſacred and inviolable, and their actions ſuperior to cenſure. But who was the firſt man who went through the anointing ceremony? Pepin of France, a rob-a robber and uſurper; a man who deprived his lawful ſovereign of his crown, and ſhut him in a cloiſter. This ſucceſsful ruffian was ſupported in his treaſon by Pope Zachary, who ſtood in need of Pepin's aſſiſtance, and who afterwards, with the help of St. Boniface, performed the office of anointing a rebel, king of France, at Rheims.

RICHARD.

Strives Bolingbroke to be as great as we?
Greater he ſhall not be: if he ſerve God,
We'll ſerve him too, and be his fellows ſo.

This is the nature of man. In his proſperity he forgets all piety to heaven, all ſocial ties and obligations. Richard, who, while his affairs wore a ſmiling aſpect, neither reverenced God nor regarded man, is here by our excellent moralizer, made ſo humble as to find no relief in his diſtreſs equally efficacious with repentance and amendment of life.

RICHARD.

The power, I have, diſcharge, and let them go
To ear the land.——

Mr. Steevens rightly ſays, that earing the land is ploughing it. It is properly a Scotch word, and is ſpelt *ere*, which is derived from another North-Britiſh word, *erde*, the earth.*

Scene III.

Our author purſues the thread of hiſtory very cloſely, and has given proper colours to the feigned ſubmiſſion of Hereford and the treachery of Northumberland. The king, deſerted by the greateſt part of his followers, retired to the iſle of Angleſea; where he purpoſed to embark for Ireland

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* Gloſſary to Gawin Douglas's Virgil.

land or France, there to wait ſome opportunity of returning to England: but the uſurper, alarmed at this ſtep, ſent Northumberland to deceive him with falſe promiſes of loyalty and ſubmiſſion. The earl, by ſolemn proteſtations and ſhameful perjury, made himſelf maſter of the king's perſon, and carried him to Flint-caſtle. The interview between the king and his couſin of Lancaſter was more rough and auſtere, on the part of the duke, than the poet has repreſented it. He told the king, in plain terms, that, his ſubjects being diſſatisfied with his government, he was come to aſſiſt him to govern better. The king anſwered humbly: "Dear couſin, ſince that is your pleaſure, it is ours alſo." To mortify the king on a very tender point, during the whole of his journey from Flint-caſtle to London, he was, beſides being mounted on a very ſhabby horſe, not ſuffered to change his apparel. No prince in Europe had ſo rich a wardrobe as Richard, or delighted ſo much in ſplendid and coſtly dreſſes.

Act IV. Scene I. The parliament-houſe.

A ſtronger and truer picture of the ſavage manners of our anceſtors cannot be delineated than in this illiberal ſcene between the prime nobility of the land. A glove is thrown down by one nobleman with terms of ſcorn and reproach, and accepted by another with words of brutality and fierceneſs. The preſence of the duke of Lancaſter, maſter of the kingdom and pretender to the throne, could not awe the diſputants into reſpect and ſilence. Mr. Hume ſays that no leſs than fifty challenges were given and accepted at this meeting of the parliament.

BOLINGBROKE.

In God's name then I'll aſcend the throne.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE.

Marry, God forbid!

Thomas Merks, biſhop of Carliſle, (a name which ought to be revered to lateſt poſterity,) was, in that great concourſe of the clergy and laity aſſembled on this occaſion, the only man who had honeſty and courage to ſpeak in the defence of his unhappy ſovereign, and againſt the violence and uſurpation of Bolingbroke. His ſpeech was long, and is quoted from Sir John Hayward, in the Parliamentary Hiſtory. It contains a retroſpective view of all kinds of government; and the biſhop's argument is ſtrengthened from ſcripture authority.

IDEM.

And ſhall the figure of God's majeſty,
His captain, ſteward, deputy elect,
Anointed, crowned, planted many years,
Be judg'd by ſubject and inferior breath?

In vain does Dr. Warburton ſtrive to make Shakſpeare a Whig in principle, long before the limits between prerogative and privilege were determined. The political and religious creeds in Queen Elizabeth's reign were equally favourable to the abſolute power of the prince; and I have often wondered that lord Bolingbroke ſhould aſſert, that the doctrine of paſſive obedience lay undiſcovered, in ſome old homily, till the times of James I. All the Chronicles of Hollingſhead, Hall, Grafton, Stowe, and Fabian, breathe the ſame nonreſiſting ſpirit; nor do I know that any Engliſh divine oppoſed it, till our incomparable Hooker, in his Eccleſiaſtical Polity, with an irreſiſtible force of argument, demoliſhed that infamous poſition on which is founded

Th' enormous faith of millions made for one.

Tom Chapman, a moſt excellent actor in various parts, but eſpecially in all Shakſpeare's clowns, in petulant would-be-wits, fops and fantaſtics, and many other abſurd humorous characters, inſiſted upon repreſenting what nature never deſigned him for,—a grave tragic character. The biſhop of Carliſle was a delicious morſel, which he would not ſuffer to eſcape him. No man was ever more eager for preferment than Chapman for the *os rotundum* of tragic elocution. Rich, it was obſerved, took delight in thwarting the inclinations of his actors. How Chapman could prevail upon him to let him indulge himſelf in his abſurd humour, I cannot gueſs; unleſs he flattered the manager's vanity by ſubmitting to be taught by him: for this was a failing as weakly peculiar in Rich as the love of reciting tragedy was in Chapman. In truth, there was nothing more diſſonant and unharmonious than his ſpeaking, or rather bellowing, the biſhop's harangue. He was endured in his diſcords, on account of his many excellences in comedy. But ſo fond was he of what he did not underſtand, that although the firſt actor in his own proper walk, he would condeſcend to ſolicit earneſtly for any inferior part in tragedy. It was hopeleſs, he knew, to contend for the character of Richard III. however, he ſolaced himſelf in the ſhort part of Treſſell, in the ſame play; in which he inhumanly murdered a moſt pathetic deſcription of Prince Edward's death by the hand of the duke of Gloſter. At his own theatre of Richmond, where he had the double claim of manager and principal performer, he exerted his power, to the deſtruction of his own property, as well as of all propriety. Inſtead of Tom in The Conſcious Lovers, (in which part he was ſure to give infinite pleaſure,) he would needs aſſume the fine gentleman, in the perſon of young Bevil. As to the comedy of The Buſy Body, he declared that Marplot, in which he excited as much good laughter as ever ſhook a merry audience, was not his proper part, and therefore inſiſted upon making himſelf of no conſequence, by acting Sir George Airy. At Richmond, too, he ſtrutted in the robes of King Richard III. to empty benches. Nothing but his being deſerted by the ſpectators could reſtore him to his ſenſes. However, Tom Chapman has had many to keep him company in his ridiculous paſſion.——Did not Farquhar think himſelf a good actor, and excite the commiſeration of his friends, when he murdered his own Sir Harry Wildair on the Dublin ſtage? Did not the tragic Rowe write The Biter, a comedy; and was he not the only perſon of the audience that laughed during the acting of it? Did not Sir Godfrey Kneller ſwear to Mr. Gay, that, inſtead of ſtudying the art of painting, he ought to have been bred a ſoldier, becauſe he had a martial mien? And did not Hogarth prefer his lamentable Sigiſmunda to his Marriage a la Mode?

CHAPTER IX.

A king reſigning his crown before his people.—Shakſpeare inferior to himſelf.—Interview in the Tower between Richard and Lancaſter.—Richard's folly in upbraiding the infringement of oaths.--Oaths made only for ſubjects.—Univerſity of Oxford contradicting its own doctrine.—Character of Northumberland.—The family of Percy.—The actor who preſented to Richard a looking-glaſs.—Richard's houſehold.—Their profuſion and profligacy.—Meaning of the word purveyor.—*A member of parliament condemned to be hanged.—Saved by the clergy.—Aumerle ſtigmatized.—Hallam an imitator of Wilks.—Michael Stoppelaer, an honeſt blunderer.—Story of Stoppelaer and Rich.*

Scene continues. Re-enter York with Richard.

WE cannot ſuppoſe a more awful and affecting tranſaction, than a prince brought before his ſubjects, compelled to deprive himſelf of his royalty, and to reſign his crown to the popular claimant, his near relation. This is a ſubject worthy the genius of Shakſpeare; and yet, it muſt be confeſſed, he has fallen infinitely ſhort of his uſual powers to excite that tumult of paſſion which the action merited: he was ever too fond of quibble and conceit; but here he has indulged himſelf beyond his uſual predilection for them; and I cannot help thinking, from this circumſtance alone, that Richard II. was written and acted much earlier than the date in the ſtationers books of 1597. However, if it ſhould happen to be as it is recorded, the author made the public ample amends by producing, the year following, one of the moſt perfect of all his pieces, The firſt Part of King Henry IV. However Shakſpeare might think proper to heighten

ten the ſcene by introducing Richard before the parliament to renounce his right to the crown, in fact it was not ſo. The poet has worked up the whole from what paſſed in the tower between the deputies of the parliament, Lancaſter and Richard. The deputation conſiſted of the chief nobility and commons with the archbiſhop of York at their head, who, after being introduced to the captive king, put him in mind of his voluntary offer to reſign the crown in the preſence of the archbiſhop of Canterbury and the Earl of Northumberland: Richard acknowledged his promiſe, and deſired to have an interview with his ſucceſſor. After ſome converſation between him and Lancaſter, the king, with an air of cheerfulneſs, called for the act of reſignation, which he read over diſtinctly, and ſolemnly confirmed it by an oath; he then conſtituted the archbiſhop of York and the biſhop of Hereford his procurators to ſignify his intention to parliament, and drawing the royal ſignet from his own finger, he put it on that of the duke of Lancaſter; ſaying, at the ſame time, he could wiſh all his people ſhould know, that if it were in his power, the duke ſhould ſucceed him to the crown of England.

RICHARD.

There ſhouldſt thou find one heinous article,
Containing the depoſing of a king,
And cracking the ſtrong warrant of an oath.

In vain does the prince accuſe the ſubject of infringing his oath of obedience, who has himſelf broken through the moſt ſolemn of all obligations, the oath taken at his coronation. Richard thought, with King John and other arbitrary monarchs, that oaths were only framed for ſubjects: but it is ſurely abſurd to imagine that millions ſhould be bound by ſolemn ties to obey one man, and that he ſhould be ſubject to no other reſtriction than his own will and pleaſure. To ſay that the goſpel exacts the ſame ſubmiſſion to a Nero as a Titus, to a Richard II. as a George II. is to libel that religion which profeſſes to ſpeak peace and good-will to man, and which certainly never intended to leave mankind worſe than it found them. But indeed the doctrine of paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance has been ever found a wiſp of ſtraw, in this country, whenever princes have trampled upon law, juſtice, and humanity. The famous univerſity of Oxford, at a time when it was ſuppoſed their immunities were in no danger, ſolemnly enforced unlimited obedience to the king; but, when the privileges of that learned community were attacked by the hand of power, they ſupported the invader of the kingdom, who profeſſed himſelf a friend to the laws and the conſtitution, with all their influence.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

My lord, diſpatch; read over theſe articles.

The family of Percy, one of the nobleſt and beſt allied of any in the kingdom, were, for their great hoſpitality and their military atchievements, deſervedly in high eſtimation with the people of England. However, it muſt be confeſſed, that, for many centuries, the hiſtory of the peerage furniſhes us ample matter of contention between this noble family and the crown, which always ended much to the diminution of that ſplendor which a contrary conduct would have reflected on that illuſtrious houſe. The earl of Northumberland, in the play of Richard II. is drawn, by the pen of Shakſpeare, as a moſt cruel and unremitting perſecutor of Richard; nor has he given the leaſt hint for a conduct ſo apparently reprehenſible, though hiſtory could have furniſhed him with a very plauſible, if not a reaſonable one.

When Richard ſet out for the Iriſh wars, having formed a jealouſy of the earl of Northumberland, more from a conſciouſneſs of his own imbecillity than any real cauſe of diſtruſt, he ſummoned the earl to attend him at Briſtol, and to paſs over with him to Ireland. Northumberland offered the king many excuſes for his not being able to comply with his commands; but more particularly one, with which the king was well acquainted,—the bad faith of the Scots; intimating that they would in all probability invade England, ſhould they find the army removed from the borders. The infatuated king, not ſatisfied with this anſwer, ordered the earl and all his adherents to be proclaimed traitors.

Enter one with a glaſs.

The perſon who, about forty-five years ſince, was employed to bring in a mirror to Richard,* is now, by the general voice, allowed to be the firſt comedian of the age. He was then indeed a very young actor, and has gradually riſen to that degree of eſtimation which he now deſervedly enjoys.

RICHARD.

——— Was this the face
That every day, under his houſehold roof,
Did keep ten thouſand men?———

This is a fact which hiſtory has delivered down to us. It bears the ſhew of great humanity and the moſt extended benevolence, and therefore merits a ſerious diſcuſſion. From what ſource of wealth could ſo vaſt a multitude be maintained? If from the revenues of the crown, the greatneſs of the expenditure muſt have contributed to leſſen their value: and accordingly we find that Gaunt charges the king, in the ſecond act, with letting his lands to farm, and being not the king, but the landlord, of England. To ſupply this waſte of the crown lands, it was neceſſary for the king to make frequent applications to the lords and commons; and indeed none of our Plantagenet princes gained from their ſubjects more ample parliamentary ſupplies than Richard. But the charge of maintaining ſo large a houſehold, and ſuch a number of officers dependent upon it, was one of the great enormities of this oppreſſive reign. Immoderate exactions, which were occaſioned by the king's purveyors, whoſe office it was to procure proviſion for the king and houſehold whenever they removed from one place to another, were of the moſt intolerable nature. It is obſerved, in our law-books, that the word *purveyor*, about this period of our hiſtory, was become ſo odious, that, by a ſtatute, it was changed to *acateur*, or purchaſer. But the court or houſehold of Richard was branded on more accounts than one. The luxury, diſſipation, and debauchery, of the courtiers, male and female, are recorded and cenſured by all our hiſtorians. In Richard's time, the houſe of commons, having for ſome time been ſeparated from the lords,* began to feel their ſtrength and importance. A certain member of that houſe, apprized of the profligate conduct of the courtiers, and their uncontrouled waſte of the public money, made a motion to enquire into the abuſes in the king's houſehold. Richard, hearing of this unexpected attack upon his royal œconomy, went immediately to the houſe of peers, and complained to the lords of the groſs affront put upon him by a commoner. They, in compliance

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* Mr. Yates.

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* The ſeparation of the two orders of men was a happineſs which the people of Scotland never experienced; and this prevented their partaking of that democratic part of government to which they had an undoubted claim.

compliance with the king's intimation, took up the buſineſs with great eagerneſs, and immediately ordered the author of the motion to be hanged. Very luckily for the offender, he happened to be a churchman; and, the archbiſhops and biſhops falling on their knees and intreating for him, his life was ſaved.

AUMERLE.

> You holy churchmen, is there no plot
> To rid the realm of this pernicious blot.

The character of Aumerle is, above all the noblemen of his time, ſtigmatized by Hume, for baſeneſs, treachery, and cruelty.

The perſon who acted Aumerle, was one Mr. Adam Hallam, who, by an imitation of the action of Wilks, eſpecially in a certain peculiar cuſtom of pulling down his ruffles and rolling his ſtockings, joined to a good degree of diligence, ſo far gained upon Rich's want of diſcernment, that he hired him for ſeven years at a very large ſalary. When the term of his engagement was expired, his employer diſmiſſed him, and for the greateſt part of his remaining life he was an itinerant actor. Hallam, about ſix and thirty years ſince, tranſlated The Beggar's Opera into French, which was repreſented in the little theatre in the Haymarket with ſome ſucceſs. He alſo invented the armour and other decorations, preparatory to the ſingle combat between the dukes of Hereford and Norfolk. Hallam died a kind of penſioner to the managers, who were the immediate ſucceſſors of Rich, to whoſe family he was, I think, related.

ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER.

> Before I ſpeak my mind herein,
> You ſhall not only take the ſacrament, &c.

The perſonæ dramatis of this play are ſo numerous, that the manager was reduced to the neceſſity of employing honeſt Michael Stoppelaer, of blundering memory, in the part of a dignified clergyman, the abbot of Weſtminſter, to which he was by no means equal; for Stoppelaer's action and behaviour, added to an accidental hoarſeneſs, ſet the ſpectators in a loud laugh. Honeſt Mich was remarkable for ſinging a Scotch or Iriſh ſong, particularly *Arrah my Judy*, and *Corn-Riggs are bonny*. He was ſomething of a ſcholar too, and educated at Trinity-College, Dublin. He ſang, not *unpleaſingly*, to a tune which I have forgotten, Horace's Ode of *Integer vitæ, ſceleriſque purus*, &c. It was Mich's faculty to utter abſurd ſpeeches and diſagreeable truths, without any deſign to give offence. I ſhall quote one anecdote, which will give the reader an idea of his character. Rich was talking to ſome of the actors, when Stoppelaer was preſent, concerning the diſproportioned agreement he had made with Hallam, who acted Aumerle, Stoppelaer ſhook his head and ſaid, *Upon my ſoul, Sir, he got on the blind ſide of you there.* Rich, apprehenſive of hearing ſomething more offenſive, left the company: ſomebody preſent obſerved that Stoppelaer's ſpeech was exceedingly improper, and really affronting, becauſe every body knew that Mr. Rich had a great blemiſh in one of his eyes.—"Upon my word, ſaid Mich, *I never heard of it before, and I will go immediately and aſk his pardon.*"

CHAPTER X.

Scene between Richard and his queen.—Some excellent lines.—Mrs. Horton, the actreſs, her great beauty.—Playing with ſtrollers at Windſor.—Juba and Lord Malpas.—Mrs. Horton's addreſs to ill-natured critics.——Her merit in acting.—Her love of coquetry..—Fine deſcription of Bolingbroke and Richard.—His tyrannical conduct to the citizens of London. Kings of England pillagers of London.—Richard and his groom.—Nat Clarke.—Anecdote of Rich.—Shakſpeare differs from hiſtorians in the account of Richard's death.—Reflections upon it.—Sad conſequences of Henry's uſurpation.

Act V.

Queen and Richard.

THE ſcene between Richard and the queen is not written in Shakſpeare's happieſt ſtyle; the play upon words and exuberant extenſion of ſentiments are juſtly reprehended by the critics. However, ſome part of it muſt be exempted from cenſure, and particularly this thought of Richard,

> ——I am ſworn brother, ſweet,
> To grim neceſſity, and he and I
> Will keep a league with death.

Likewiſe his advice to the queen, to tell his melancholy tale, by a winter's fire,

> ——To good old folks,
> And ſend the hearers weeping to their beds,

is affecting. Colley Cibber has judiciouſly borrowed and applied it to the ſtory of Henry VI. in his Richard III.

The queen was perſonated by Mrs. Horton; one of the moſt beautiful women that ever trod the ſtage. She was married, when very young, to a muſician, who was inſenſible to her charms, and treated her, as it has been ſaid, very brutally. The firſt notice that was taken of her was at Windſor, in the ſummer of 1713; where ſhe acted Marcia, in Cato, in a company of miſerable ſtrollers, who were drawn there on account of Queen Anne's making it the place of her reſidence ſeveral months in the year. Cato and his ſenate met with little reſpect from the audience; and poor Juba was ſo truly an object of ridicule, that, when he cried out, in a tranſport of joy, on hearing Marcia's confeſſion of her paſſion for him, "What do I hear?" my Lord Malpas, wilfully miſtaking the actor, loudly ſaid, from behind the ſcenes, *Upon my word, ſir, I do not know: I think you had better be any where elſe:* and this joke, I believe, put an end to the play. However, Mrs. Horton was ſo ſuperior in merit to the reſt, and ſo attractive in her perſon, that ſhe was ſoon after very powerfully recommended to the managers of Drury-lane Theatre, who engaged her at a moderate ſalary. Her chief merit conſiſted in giving ſprightlineſs to gay coquets, ſuch as Belinda in the Old Batchelor, and Millamant in the Way of the World; in which laſt character ſhe was ſaid to have excelled Mrs. Oldfield. Upon Mrs. Younger's quitting Drury-lane for a more advantageous income at Lincoln's-inn-fields, ſhe was called upon by Wilks to act the part of Phillis in the Conſcious Lovers. Younger had given the public ſo much entertainment in that part, that Mrs. Horton met with very uncandid treatment from the audience; who ſo far forgot what was due to merit and the handſomeſt woman on the ſtage, that they endeavoured to diſcourage her by frequent hiſſing. She bore this treatment with patience for ſome time. At laſt, ſhe advanced to the front of the ſtage, and boldly addreſſed the pit: "Gentlemen, what do you mean? what diſpleaſes you; my acting or my perſon?" This ſhew of ſpirit recovered the ſpectators into good humour, and they cried out, as with one voice, "No, no, Mrs. Horton; we are not diſpleaſed: go on, go on." As ſhe advanced in life, though ſhe ſtill retained great beauty of features, ſhe grew corpulent; and by ſtriving to preſerve the appearance of a fine ſhape, ſhe laced herſelf ſo tight that the upper part of her figure bore no proportion to the reſt of her body.

For many years ſhe was a favourite actreſs in tragedy and comedy, and commanded a large income: but the natural and eaſy dialogue of Pritchard ſo captivated the public, that poor Horton was ſoon deprived of that influence which ſhe had poſſeſſed, and was ſtripped of her characters one by one. At laſt ſhe became ſo low in credit with the public, that Rich, out of compaſſion, offered to employ her at the reduced ſalary of 4 l. per week. This ſhe refuſed, in a fit of ill-timed reſentment, and could never perſuade him to make a ſecond offer. Mr. Garrick and Mr. Lacy, by giving her a part of a benefit annually, made ſome addition to a ſmall annuity ſhe enjoyed. Her beauty was ſo remarkable in the early part of life, that few young men could ſee her without having a tendreſſe for her, which ſhe never diſcouraged; for, indeed, ſhe was ſo true a coquet, that a compliment to her charms, from the meaneſt perſon in the theatre, was acceptable, and always returned with a ſmile or tap with her fan. On the verge of threeſcore ſhe dreſſed like a girl of twenty, and kept ſimpering and ogling to the laſt; and if features, preſerved even at that cold age, could juſtify her weakneſs, ſhe certainly was pardonable; for, of all the women I ever ſaw, ſhe had the greateſt pretence to vanity. A nobleman, ſome few years before her death, offered her a very large ſettlement to live with him, which ſhe generouſly rejected. Her ſole paſſion was to be admired. She died about the year 1756.

Scene II. York and his ducheſs.

YORK.

As in a theatre the eyes of men,
After a well-grac'd actor leaves the ſtage,
Are idly bent on him who enters next.

This pathetic deſcription of Richard's entry into London, finely contraſted with that of Bolingbroke, has been univerſally admired; Mr. Dryden declares that he knows nothing equal to it in ancient dramatic poetry, and I believe, we may defy the moderns to pattern it.

IDEM.

———Mens eyes did ſcowl
On Richard: no man cry'd, God ſave him!
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home,
But duſt was thrown upon his ſacred head!

Richard's reception in London could not be very different from the poet's deſcription of it *. Some citizens were brutal enough to propoſe to his

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* Stowe has added a circumſtance in Lancaſter's behaviour, on this occaſion, which is not to be found, I think, in any other writer.

"When the duke came within two miles of the city, he cauſed the hoſt to ſtay, and then ſaid to the commons of the city, 'My maſters, behold here your king, conſider well what you will do with him.'— They anſwered, 'He ſhould be ſent to Weſtminſter:' whereupon he was delivered unto them, and they led him to Weſtminſter, and from thence by water to the tower of London."

his rival the putting him to immediate death; And, though no man of humanity can forbear reſenting with indignation the baſe propoſal of theſe wretches, it muſt be confeſſed that Richard merited little favour from the Londoners. He had given them great and almoſt unpardonable provocation. For the offences of a few members of the corporation he had deprived the city of London of its privileges, and impriſoned the chief magiſtrate and others next to him in office. In his whole conduct in this affair he manifeſted a mean and cruel diſpoſition. When the king, upon the city's humble ſubmiſſion, was reconciled to the citizens, he accepted, from the mayor, aldermen, and principal inhabitants, a grand entertainment, at which he and all his court were preſent. The preſents given to Richard, his queen, and the courtiers, were eſtimated at ten thouſand pounds, which, at that time, amounted to an immenſe ſum. On this occaſion, to win the good-will of Richard, the city diſplayed all its grandeur, and no expence was ſpared to ſhew their profound reſpect to royalty. But, notwithſtanding the king expreſſed himſelf to be highly pleaſed with his reception, and received the magnificent gifts preſented to him with complacency, he fined the city of London in the ſum of ten thouſand pounds. This exorbitant penalty and outrageous act of power, when a contrary conduct was expected, exaſperated the citizens, and they never forgave the king.

The kings of England, it muſt be obſerved, from King John to James I. ſeemed to have conſidered the city of London as a place which they might ſafely pillage whenever impelled by their neceſſities. To gain the good-will of that ſhameleſs ſpendthrift, Henry III. who had the folly to declare, *that it was more charity to beſtow money upon him than on the meaneſt beggar*, London was obliged to pay down the ſum of 20,000l. and James I. we are informed by Camden, without ſo much as pretending any right or claim except his immediate wants, demanded alſo of the Londoners 20,000l. The citizens, although they knew his weakneſs and deſpiſed his power, yet with great condeſcenſion made him an offer of half the ſum; which James prudently accepted. Quarrels between the court and the city of London have never produced any real advantage to the crown. To affect a contempt for a reſpectable body of men, who contribute ſo largely to the revenue, is ſomething more than ridiculous.

Act V. Scene V. Richard and a groom.

GROOM.

Oh! how it yearn'd my heart when I beheld
In London ſtreets ———————
When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary;
That horſe, which thou ſo often haſt beſtrid,
That horſe, that I ſo carefully have dreſs'd.

This is one of thoſe ſcenes which diſgrace the tragedy of a great king, and gives to me convincing proof, that Shakſpeare, after writing this play, and not finding it much reliſhed by the audience, took no ſuitable pains to correct and improve it. However, the groom ſpeaks much in character; for he ſeems more anxious about the horſe, *which he had ſo carefully dreſſed*, than concerned for the misfortunes of his maſter. One of our Chronicles relates, that, when Richard was firſt delivered into the power of Lancaſter, a favourite greyhound of his abandoned his maſter, and fawned upon the conqueror, who ſeemed much pleaſed with the omen.

To fill up the account of the actors in this play when laſt revived, I ſhall juſt mention ſome particulars relating to Nat Clarke, who acted the groom. He was a man fitted by nature to repreſent under parts. Clarke was the original Filch in the Beggar's Opera; and, though I greatly admire Mrs. Wilſon's adroitneſs in it, yet I think his meagre countenance and ſhambling figure were much better adapted to the character of a pickpocket than a female's delicate perſon. Nat was the chronicle of the theatre: he knew the whole hiſtory of the players, and made himſelf acceptable to buſy enquirers after theatrical matters by communicating to them many a laughable anecdote. His chief employment (on account of his reſembling Rich in ſize and figure) was that of an under-harlequin, to relieve his maſter in ſuch ſituations of the pantomime as were leaſt intereſting. Nat was happy when the audience, from ſimilarity of form, were ſurpriſed into a clap by miſtaking the man for the maſter.. The ſubſtitute was ſo like the original, that Rich one night paid ſeverely for the reſemblance. One of the actors, having had ſome words with Clarke during the repreſentation of a pantomime, waited till he ſhould find an opportunity to ſhew his reſentment. Unluckily Rich threw himſelf in the way of the angry perſon, as he came off the ſtage, and received ſuch a blow of the fiſt, on his ſtomach, as for ſome time deprived him of the power to breathe. The man, perceiving his miſtake, implored the manager's pardon; proteſting, upon his honour, he thought he had ſtruck Nat Clarke. "And pray, ſaid Rich, what terrible provocation could Clarke give, to merit ſuch a violent blow?"

Some few years before his death, Clarke retired to Hammerſmith; where he lived at eaſe, and treated his viſitors with good ale and much hiſtory.

RICHARD.

Mount, mount, my ſoul! thy ſeat is up on high;
Whilſt my groſs fleſh ſinks downward here to die.

Though Shakſpeare has followed the hiſtorian who makes Sir Pierce of Exon and his accomplices the murderers of Richard, yet the greateſt number of writers, on this period of our hiſtory, aſſert that he was ſtarved to death. His dead body was produced to the public in a ſhell, with his face uncovered. His ſucceſſor attended his funeral, with diſſembled grief, and followed him to that place which his ambition had marked out for him.

By whatever means this unhappy prince was ſent out of the world, it cannot be doubted that all methods were put in practice, by thoſe to whom he was entruſted, to make life as burdenſome to him as poſſible. Power uſurped is ever ſuſpicious, arbitrary, and cruel. By various modes of brutal unkindneſs, ſtudied neglect, and outrageous inſult, it was no difficult matter to render him weary of his exiſtence, and to make him wiſh for repoſe, where only it was to be had, in the grave. They might abridge his diet, diſturb his ſleep, and be artful in finding out methods to diſtreſs and torment him whoſe cauſe no man durſt eſpouſe. The meſſengers of his death they knew would be entertained with a glad welcome by their employers.

We may collect, from Shakſpeare and the Chronicles, that Richard, in his perſon was extremely handſome; in his younger years he gave evident proofs of ability, more particularly in his ſuppreſſing, by an act of perſonal courage and preſence of mind, at the age of ſixteen, the dangerous inſurrection of Wat Tyler and Jack Straw. His greateſt enemies were his three ambitious uncles, the dukes of Lancaſter, York, and Gloſter, who purpoſely ſuffered his mind to be uncultivated with princely virtues, and his morals to be corrupted by vicious companions. They took no care to have him trained in the art military, the only great and ſhining accompliſhment of the age.

During the time of the feudal ſyſtem, the prince ſupported his power by military proweſs. Without this, he could not guard himſelf againſt the incroachments of his barons, who, in their own diſtricts, were ſo many arbitrary deſpots. The firſt and third Edward, by perpetual wars on the continent and their own perſonal courage, kept their peers conſtantly in employ, and preſerved a reverence for their perſons. By their wars with France, the rapacity of their followers was in ſome meaſure glutted. All wars with France, till that which raged in 1782, were the dear delight of the Engliſh nation, and uſhered in ſometimes with bonfires and other tokens of public rejoicing.

Richard was fond of fine clothes, of pomps, ſhows, and ceremonies. The ſpirit of chivalry, that ſpur to noble actions, ſuperior in ſome reſpects to the Greek and Roman military inſtitutions, which had been revived by his father and grandfather, he ſeemed not to have cheriſhed, except in the mock repreſentation of it in tilts and tournaments. He wiſhed to gain popularity; but his converſation was too trifling, and too often proſtituted, to gain upon the affections of the people. Dr. Henry attributes many ſocial virtues to this prince, and amongſt the reſt his fidelity to friendſhip; but that virtue, which is praiſeworthy in a private man, often degenerates in princes to a moſt pernicious vice. Groſs partiality to a few ſubjects is inconſiſtent with the good of the whole community. With Richard and his miniſters it was an eſtabliſhed maxim, 'Be true to me, and I will be faithful to you;'—nay, ſays Lord Bolingbroke, he was ſo very weak, that his favourites prevailed upon him to bind himſelf to them by an oath. He was undone at laſt by his great confidence in his own importance: he weakly imagined, that the inſulted, the injured, and the oppreſſed, would be tied down by ſuch oaths as he wantonly impoſed upon them. Acts of parliament were heaped upon acts, to eſtabliſh laws, which were in their intention unſalutary, and conſequently odious. Hiſtory can ſcarcely furniſh ſuch an inſtance of a monarch being ſo ſuddenly abandoned by all his ſubjects. There was, in this unhappy man, one diſagreeable quality, which contributed not a little to his downfal: he had an imperious and inſolent manner of ſpeaking, on important occaſions, to perſons who, from their office in the ſtate, claimed a right to give him advice, and ought to have been liſtened to with attention. When the lords and commons, in parliament aſſembled, ſent a deputation to him, to inform him, that it was neceſſary for the good of the ſtate he ſhould remove from their employments his treaſurer and chancellor, he bade them meddle for the future with no ſuch thing; adding, '*That he would not, for them, or at their pleaſure, remove the meaneſt ſcullion in his kitchen.*' Of Richard II. it may with truth be ſaid, that he had all the bad qualities of his great-grandfather, Edward II. without any mixture of his good ones.

Notwithſtanding the depoſition of Richard was univerſally approved at that time, the conſequence of Lancaſter's uſurpation, who ſet aſide the right heir to the crown, deſcended from Lionel, duke of Clarence, proved more fatal to the kingdom than even the weak and arbitrary conduct of the depoſed king. Shakſpeare has three plays (the three parts of Henry VI.) which include a period that exhibits nothing but the ſlaughter of princes and ſubjects.—Within the ſpace of thirty-ſix years, twelve ſet battles were fought in England, concerning the ſucceſſion to the crown, by Engliſhmen only; more than fourſcore princes of the blood royal were ſlain by each other's ſwords. Nay, the hand of death did not ſtop till it had actually extinguiſhed all the male heirs of each line*.

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* Parliamentary Hiſtory.

King Henry IV. Firſt Part.

CHAPTER XI.

What rank the Firſt Part of Henry IV. *holds in the opinion of the critics.—Its remarkable excellences.—Falſtaff and his rivals.—The poet's intention in advancing the king's ſickneſs.—Cruſades.—*Thirſty entrance of the ſoil *explained.—Shakſpeare and Voltaire.—Earl of Worceſter.—*Thieves of the day's beauty, *why ſo called.—Sir John Oldcaſtle.—Sir John Falſtaff.—Gib cat.—A laugh indulged.—Foote's ſerenade of cats.—Cat Harris.—The original performer of Falſtaff, Lowin.—Cartwright, Lacy.—Henry's jealouſy of the houſe of March.—Ranſom of priſoners.—Speeches of Hotſpur and Eteocles.—Amyot and Gaſcoigne.—Burbage.—Taylor.—Hart.—Winterſhal.—Booth's Hotſpur commended.—Anecdote of Giffard and Booth.—Garrick's Hotſpur.*

IN the opinion of Dr. Warburton, and I believe of all the beſt critics, the Firſt Part of Henry IV. is, of all our author's plays, the moſt excellent; not indeed for power of invention, for ſcenes of paſſion, or even variety of incident or ſituation: but for delineation of character, propriety of ſentiment, and dignity of expreſſion.

The King, the Prince of Wales, and Hotſpur, are admirable portraits. The two firſt are faithful reſemblances taken from hiſtory; and the variation of humour, and heightening of paſſion, given to the latter, render him an intereſting dramatic perſonage.

As for Falſtaff, of whoſe character no man can ſay too much, and every man will be almoſt afraid to ſay any thing, from an apprehenſion of his not being able to treat ſo fertile a ſubject as it deſerves; he, in the confeſſion of all men, is the great maſter-piece of our inimitable writer, and of all dramatic poetry. Shakſpeare had given ſeveral ſketches of humorous characters, as if to try his abilities, before he introduced to the public this theatrical prodigy, which then aſtoniſhed Ben Johnſon, the great poet of humour, and has bidden defiance to all ſucceeding attempts to rival it. What name too deſpicable can we give to thoſe wretched imitations of the fat knight, the Tucca of Johnſon's Poetaſter, and the Cacofogo of Fletcher? Above fifty years ſince, it was traditionary, among the comedians, that Cacofogo was the intended rival of Falſtaff, whom he reſembles in nothing but in bulk and cowardice. And, as to Tucca, I ſubmit to the reader, whether that part be not a fruitleſs attempt of ſurly Ben to meaſure ſwords with his maſter.

Act I. Scene I.

KING.

So ſhaken as we are, ſo wan with care!

The action of this play begins early in the reign of Henry IV. and before he had been afflicted with any dangerous and lingering diſtemper: at leaſt, hiſtory takes no notice of his being diſeaſed before the battle of Shrewſbury.

Shakſpeare thought it would beſt anſwer his purpoſe to repreſent the king labouring with ſickneſs, and reſolving on his recovery to viſit the Holy Land, in conformity to his prior declaration in the preceding play of Richard, to expiate the murder of his ſovereign.

All our hiſtorians agree in this purpoſed expedition of Henry, which, on a cloſe examination, ſeems not to be very well founded in probability: The cruſades, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, had almoſt entirely ceaſed. The paſſion of Chriſtain princes to recover Jeruſalem from the infidels was then almoſt expiring, from the ill ſucceſs of many great and powerful adventurers, and from a perfect knowledge of the crafty deſigns of the court of Rome, to involve monarchs in foreign wars, that the ſovereign pontiffs might reap advantages by their abſence from their dominions. Beſides, Henry was too ſagacious to leave his kingdom with a title ſo doubtful as his was. If ſo weak and worthleſs a man as Prince John could, in the abſence of his brother Richard at Jeruſalem, excite ſuch diſorders as to make it neceſſary for the king to quicken his return to England, what had not Henry Bolingbroke to apprehend from one who had a fairer title to the crown than himſelf? The expedition to the Holy Land ſeems to have been a feint; perhaps, indeed, at ſome times, when in ſpite of worldly grandeur, his conſcience roſe with ſome violence upon him, a tranſient thought of expiating his guilt, by this univerſal panacea for all crimes, might come acroſs his mind, but, in all probability, without any fixed purpoſe or vigorous reſolution.

IDEM.

No more the thirſty entrance of this ſoil
Shall daub her lips with her own childrens blood.

This paſſage is very difficult: Dr. Johnſon and Mr. Steevens have, with great ingenuity, endeavoured to explain it, but, I think, without ſucceſs. The *entrance* of the ſoil is, I believe, an unneceſſary adjunct; and means, I think, the ſoil or land itſelf. The epithet *thirſty* is employed to concur with the verb *daub.* The whole is a periphraſis, ſignifying, no longer ſhall Engliſh ground be ſtained with the blood of its inhabitants.

IDEM.

To chaſe thoſe pagans in thoſe holy fields,
Over whoſe acres walk'd thoſe bleſſed feet,
Which, fourteen hundred years ago, were nail'd,
For our advantage, to the holy croſs.

The circumſtance of our Saviour's treading the ſoil of Jeruſalem, and dying there for all mankind, is finely and pathetically deſcribed by Voltaire in his Zaire, and employed as a convincing argument to reclaim an apoſtate to the true faith:

E'en in the place where thou betray'ſt thy God,
He dy'd, my child, to ſave thee! Turn thine eyes and ſee.
For thou art near his holy ſepulchre!
Thou canſt not move a ſtep *but where he trod!*
Thou trembleſt!——————

HILL's ZARA. Act II.

The pleaſure of walking over that ground which had been trodden by Chriſt and his apoſtles, was, no doubt, one great inducement to many Chriſtians to aſſume the croſs and fight againſt the infidels. Nor can this be deemed a meer act of ſuperſtition: for, if our learned travellers can feel an enthuſiaſtic delight in walking over thoſe parts of Rome, where the Scipio's, Pompeys, and Brutus's, formerly trod, Chriſtians may with the ſame or ſuperior ardour, viſit thoſe places which our Saviour and his apoſtles were known to frequent.

WESTMORELAND.

——————In the very heat
And pride of their contention.——

That is, during the fury of the battle, when both ſides ſeemed to be equally matched.

IDEM.

This is his uncle's teaching. This is Worceſter,
Malevolent to you in all aſpects.—

Thomas Percy, earl of Worceſter, is charged, by our old Chronicles, with exciting his brother and nephew to rebellion, from motives of peculiar rancour to the king. This our author, who read thoſe hiſtories with great attenſion, has, in ſeveral parts of this play, ſufficiently marked.

Scene II. Prince and Falſtaff.

FALSTAFF.

Let not us, that are ſquires of the night's body,
Be called thieves of the day's beauty.

The *day's beauty* is the ſun; conſequently Falſtaff intreats that he and his aſſociates may not be termed robbers in open day. He rather wiſhes to be diſtinguiſhed by the honourable title of Diana's foreſters, minions of the moon, &c. This ſuits with Falſtaff's courage, who would much rather rob by night than in the face of the ſun like a daring highwayman.

PRINCE HENRY.

As the honey of Hybla, my old lad of the caſtle!

I have read with attention, more than once, the ſeveral notes of Dr. Farmer and Mr. Steevens, in which they labour to exculpate Shakſpeare from having ever introduced Sir John Oldcaſtle in his play of Henry IV. Fuller, who wrote about twenty years after our author's death, and ſeems to have been no ſuperficial inquirer into matters in which the reputation of families was concerned, abſolutely fixes the charge upon Shakſpeare, and I cannot help thinking that the apology in the epilogue, to the ſecond part of this dramatic hiſtory, "*For Old-*

caſtle died a martyr, and this is not the man," is ſomewhat aukward, if Shakſpeare had not himſelf given ſome offence reſpecting Oldcaſtle.

Sir John Oldcaſtle, commonly called the martyr, whom Henry V. ſacrificed to the clergy, becauſe they aſſiſted him with their purſes in his expedition againſt the crown of France, was, in all probability, a man of a lively and gay humour; and the clergy, whom he had provoked, might, in revenge, repreſent him to the populace as a light and lewd fellow, a drunkard and a profane jeſter. This would furniſh an opportunity to the poets of the time to preſent him on the ſtage in no favourable light. But, though this ſatirical abuſe of Oldcaſtle might be permitted during the times of popery, yet, when his character became better known in the days of Queen Elizabeth, ſuch freedoms would give offence. I think it is poſſible that Shakſpeare might at firſt have inadvertently fallen into this error, and have laid hold on Sir John Oldcaſtle as a proper ſubject of buffoonery and mirth. I ſhall have occaſion, in the courſe of theſe obſervations, to ſay more on this ſubject.

FALSTAFF.

A gib cat or a lugg'd bear.

Amongſt a great number of very excellent remarks, which are plentifully ſtrewed in the editions of Shakſpeare by Johnſon and Steevens, we muſt not be ſurpriſed if we find ſome that will occaſionally raiſe our mirth, and ſuch as we may ſafely pronounce unworthy of their writers. In the laſt edition of the Variorum Shakſpeare, we have no leſs than four grave notes on the meaning of the word gib. Two reverend gentlemen, Dr. Percy and Mr. Warton, beſides Mr. Steevens and Mr. Tollet, have laboured hard to explain what ſurely was very generally underſtood: that a gib cat is one that is gelt, or caſtrated, might have been told in four or five lines. Mr. Warton preſents us with many authorities from Caxton, from the Romant of the Roſe, &c. to prove that Gilbert and Tib, were ancient names given to he-cats. But how came the critics to forget the authority of Shakſpeare himſelf in Romeo and Juliet, where Mercutio calls Tibbald *rat-catcher and king of cats*, from his name *Tybalt?*

> ———Tybalt, you ratcatcher,
> Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives.

Theſe curious notes might have been cloſed with a duetto, ſung by Dr. Deſaguliers, to that good-natured gentleman, Frederick, prince of Wales, (who dearly loved the bagatelle,) between a he and ſhe-cat. The prince often confeſſed that the doctor underſtood cat-language better than any man in England.

When Foote firſt opened the theatre in the Haymarket, amongſt other projects, he propoſed to entertain the public with an imitation of cat-muſic; for this purpoſe, he engaged a man famous for his ſkill in mimicking the mewing of cats. This perſon was called Cat Harris. He not attending the rehearſal of this odd concert, Foote deſired Shuter would endeavour to find him out, and bring him with him. Shuter was directed to ſome court in the Minories, where this extraordinary muſician lived. But, not knowing the houſe, Shuter began a *cat-ſolo.* Upon this the other looked out of the window, and anſwered him with a cantata of the ſame ſort.—"Come along, ſays Shuter, I want no better information that you are the man:—Mr. Foote ſtays for us:—we cannot begin the cat-opera without you!"

The original performer of Falſtaff was, doubtleſs, that excellent comedian W. Lowin; the praiſe and boaſt of his time for variety of comic parts In Downes's Roſcius Anglicanus, we have the name of Cartwright for Falſtaff's repreſentative, ſoon after the Reſtoration. Little is ſaid of this player by any ſtage-hiſtorian. We find his name in the Rehearſal, in which he ſpoke Bayes's prologue, I think, and acted one of the Majeſties of Brentford. It is ſomewhere ſaid that he was a bookſeller. Lacy, a favourite actor of Charles II. who had him drawn in three different characters, ſtill to be ſeen at Hampton Court, ſucceeded Cartwright in Falſtaff. Langbaine ſpeaks of him as the moſt perfect comic player of his time. Cibber, I fancy, had never ſeen him; for the name of Lacy is not mentioned in his Apology. He was one of the recruits which the king's company picked up ſoon after the Reſtoration. I can find no trace of his having acted before the civil wars. He wrote three plays, in which, I believe, his own action was the principal recommendation. He died about the year 1683.

The prince of Wales was repreſented originally, if we may be allowed to gueſs, by Burbage, who was tall and thin. I ſhall defer what I have to ſay farther of the prince and Falſtaff till their next ſcene.

Scene III. King, Northumberland, Hotſpur, Worceſter, &c.

KING.

The moody *frontier* of a ſervant brow.

Dr. Warburton propoſes to read *frontlet.* Mr. Steevens ſays the word *frontlet* does not ſignify forehead:—not in its original ſenſe, it is granted: but ſurely in its applied and metaphorical. He did not recollect that, in a parallel paſſage, Lear ſays to Goneril,

Now, daughter, what means that frontlet on?

KING.

Shall we buy treaſon and indent with fears?

It may be aſked, Who are the ſellers of this treaſon?—The Percy family: though they had not, indeed, according to Mr. Steevens, forfeited their lives and eſtates, the king plainly inſinuates that they were the abettors and partiſans of Mortimer, and encouragers of his traiterous practices. Henry's anger is principally owing to his hatred and jealouſy of Mortimer, whoſe title to the crown was much clearer than his own. In ſuch dread did he hold the houſe of March, that he would not permit any of the family to be named in parliament.

HOTSPUR.

Revolted Mortimer!

Theſe two words ſhould be ſpoken loudly and vehemently, from a ſudden impulſe of paſſion, which the impetuous Hotſpur could not reſtrain. Upon the king's turning quickly on him with a look of anger and reſentment, he immediately ſoftens the tone of his voice to a low and ſubmiſſive cadence.

KING.

Send us your priſoners, or you ſhall hear of it!

In the time of the feudal ſyſtem, one great motive to incite the barons to ſerve in war, was the treaſure they acquired by the ranſom of the priſoners they took in battle. A war with France was, to the nobility of this kingdom, for that reaſon, a very deſirable event.

Sir William Manny, in the French wars during the reign of Edward III. is ſaid by hiſtorians to have gained immenſe treaſures by the priſoners he captured in war. For this reaſon, Henry's conduct, in demanding all Hotſpur's priſoners, appears to be very unjuſt.

By the ancient laws of Norway, the priſoner, and every thing he had about him, belonged to the captor; except the gold in his purſe, which was reſerved for the king.*

HOTSPUR.

At this ingrate, this canker'd Bolingbroke.

Cankered Bolingbroke was a term which Mr. Addiſon, in converſation, applied to Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke; with what propriety I do not ſee. That this great ſtateſman was ardent both in his friendſhips and enmities is to be learned from his letters and his general conduct; but that he harboured a rancorous and cankered diſpoſition I cannot perſuade myſelf. Addiſon, however benevolent in his writings, was not free from that leaven of party which often ſours the beſt minds.

IDEM.

By heavens! methinks it were an eaſy leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line did never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks;
So he that did redeem her thence might wear,
Without co-rival, all her dignities.

This ſally of Hotſpur Dr. Warburton has ſtamped with the epithets of heroic and ſublime; and, to juſtify Shakſpeare, has quoted Euripides. Dr. Johnſon has critically defended this rapturous exploſion of a hot and fiery diſpoſition, which is certainly not quite ſimilar to the ſpeech of Eteocles in the Phœniſſæ of Euripides, nor can it be termed allegorical. The learned Mr. Woodhull, in a note to his tranſlation of that tragedy, has given this ſpeech of Eteocles, as verſified by Amyot, from an extract of Plutarch's treatiſe on Fraternal Love; and another tranſlation from Gaſcoigne's works, publiſhed in 1575. It muſt be owned that the lively Frenchman, in ſpirit and elegance, excels the Engliſhman.

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* Speculum regale.

> Je monterois en l'etoile ſejour
> Du clair ſoleil, ou commence le jour;
> Et je deſcendrois deſſous la terre baſſe;
> Si je pouvois acquerir par l'audace
> Le roiaume ſouverain des dieux.

Gaſcoigne rather creeps than ſoars:

> If I could rule or reign in heav'n above,
> And eke command in depth of darkſome hell,
> No toil, no travail, ſhould my ſprites abaſh,
> To take the way unto my reſtleſs will. —
> To climb aloft, or down for to deſcend.

I D E M.

By heavens, he ſhall not have a ſcot of them.

In our author's time this was a proverbial expreſſion, meaning — he ſhall not have the moſt worthleſs thing I have*.

I D E M.

> Oh! let the hours be ſhort,
> Till fields, and blows, and groans, applaud our ſport.

This ſpirited exclamation of Hotſpur reſembles a ſpeech of Eteocles, in the Septem contra Thebas of Æſchylus:

> Μη νυν, εαν θνησκοντας η τετρωμενȣς
> Πυθησθε, κωκυτοισιν αρπαλιζετε·
> Τȣτω γαρ Αρης βοσκεται φονώ βροτων.

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* Fuller.

> If haply now your eyes behold the dead
> Or wounded, burſt not forth in loud laments;
> For blood and carnage are the food of war.
>
> POTTER.

The action of this ſcene is very animating and important. The jealouſy, ſuſpicion, and diſtruſt of Henry, are finely contraſted with the high ſpirit and daring impetuoſity of Hotſpur; Agamemnon and Achilles are not more ſtrongly delineated, nor their paſſions more highly coloured, by Homer, than theſe characters of Shakſpeare. The conduct of the ſcene is truly dramatic, from the beginning to the cloſe of it.

I have ſuppoſed, and I believe with probability, that Burbage originally acted the Prince of Wales; and am of opinion we may give Hotſpur to Taylor, the original Hamlet. If Taylor was, as we may conjecture from what the queen ſays of him in the fencing-ſcene between Hamlet and Laertes, 'fat, and ſcant of breath,' we cannot ſuppoſe him fit for the tall and ſlender Harry. After the Reſtoration, Hart repreſented Hotſpur, Burt the Prince of Wales, and Winterſhul the King. The excellency of Hart is univerſally acknowledged; of Burt we can only tranſcribe what Downs has recorded. He ranks him in the liſt of good actors, with Shotterel and Cartwright, but without any diſcriminating marks. That he was not a man of ſuperior merit we may gather from his being obliged to reſign the part of Othello to Hart, who had formerly acted Caſſio when Burt played the principal character. Winterſhul was, in the opinion of the beſt critics, a very judicious actor in comedy and tragedy, and an excellent teacher of the art he profeſſed. He was ſo celebrated for the part of Cokes, in Ben Jonſon's Bartholomew-Fair, that the public preferred him even to Nokes in that character. Winterſhul is mentioned with honour in the notes on the Rehearſal; he died in July, 1679.

Betterton's Hotſpur is celebrated by Cibber amongſt his moſt capital exhibitions, and by Sir Richard Steele in the Tatler. But the verſatility of Betterton's genius was never more conſpicuous than in his reſigning the choleric Hotſpur, in his declining years, and aſſuming the humour and gaiety of Falſtaff, in which he is ſaid to have been full as acceptable to the public as in the former. Powel was, I believe, his ſucceſſor in Hotſpur. With the happy advantages of perſon, voice, and geſture, this comedian muſt have given a ſtriking reſemblance of a young, gallant, and brave ſoldier. But Powel's intemperance rendered him often unequal to himſelf; and he ſo far at laſt impaired his abilities, that his parts were often ſupplied by players of inferior merit.

Booth's Hotſpur was, in the opinion of the critics who ſaw him in the character, one of the moſt perfect exhibitions of the ſtage. His ſtrong, yet harmonious pipe, reached the higheſt note of exclamatory rage without hurting the muſic of its tone. His geſture was ever in union with his utterance, and his eye conſtantly combined with both to give a correſpondent force to the paſſion. His tread in this part was quick, yet ſignificant, accompanied with princely grandeur. — When Giffard, late manager of the theatre in Goodman's Fields, — an actor much favoured by Wilks, on account of paying him the moſt pleaſing of all flattery, an imitation of his manner of acting, — was, through the intereſt of his great exemplar, favoured with a benefit, and permitted to act that night the prince of Wales; Booth, who entertained too great a contempt for Wilks in tragedy, and of conſequence ſtill more deſpiſed his humble imitator, declared, without any ceremony that he would that night 'let off an Iriſh actor.' The theatre was extremely crouded, both in the front and on the ſtage. I have heard Mr. Lacy, the late manager, Mr. Victor, and others, who were preſent, declare, that they never ſaw ſo animated a performance, and attended with ſuch loud and repeat ed plaudits from all parts of the theatre, as Booth's Hotſpur. Giffard, who was juſt arived from Dublin theatre, honeſtly owned that he was ſtruck with aſtoniſhment, and heartily joined in the general approbation. When rouſed by accidental jealouſy or humour, Booth always excelled himſelf.

In acting Othello once, to a ſmall audience, Booth threw ſuch a languor into ſeveral ſcenes of the part, which was ſaid to be his maſter-piece, that nobody could diſcern their favourite and admired actor. But, in the third act, as if rouſed from a lethargy to the moſt animating vigour, he diſplayed ſuch uncommon fire and force, that the players and the audience ſeemed to be equally electrified by this ſudden exertion of his powers. When, at the end of the act, the players retired into the green room, Cibber, who acted Iago, ſaid to him, 'Prythee, Barton, what was the charm that inſpired you ſo all on a ſudden?'—'Why, Colley, I ſaw, by chance, an Oxford-man in the pit, whoſe judgment I revere more than that of a whole audience.'

In the agreement between Quin and Garrick, in 1746, to aſſiſt each other with their mutual ſkill in ſeveral ſelect plays, Quin laid his hand upon Henry IV. and called upon Garrick to give him his aſſiſtance, by exerting his talents in Hotſpur: 'For you know, David, Falſtaff is ſo weighty, that he cannot do without a lever.' The other complied, though I believe with ſome reluctance; for he knew that the portion of Hotſpur, which beſt ſuited his animated manner of ſpeaking, would be exhauſted in the firſt ſcene of the part. The old comedian, by this manœuvre, ſurpriſed the caution of the young actor.

The perſon of Garrick was not formed to give a juſt idea of the gallant and noble Hoſpur. The mechanic, or bulky, part was wanting; nor could the fine flexibility of his voice entirely conquer the high rant and continued rage of the enthuſiaſtic warrior. He had not then acquired that complete knowledge of modulation which he was afterwards taught by more experience. During the acting of this play, he was ſeized with a cold and hoarſeneſs; and, after acting Hotſpur about five nights with applauſe, though not with that univerſal approbation which generally attended his performance, he fell ſick, and was confined to his chamber ſix or ſeven weeks. This happened about the latter end of February; nor did he make his appearance on the ſtage till he acted Ranger, in the Suſpicious Huſband, for his benefit, in April following.

His dreſs in Hotſpur was objected to: a laced frock and a Ramilie wig were thought too inſignificant for the character.

During his illneſs, as much concern was expreſſed by the public, for his recovery, as if he had been a prince of the blood greatly honoured and beloved. The door of his lodgings was every day crouded with ſervants, who came from perſons of the firſt rank, and indeed of all ranks, to enquire after his health. Mrs. Oldfield happened to be in ſome danger in a Graveſend-boat: and, when the reſt of the paſſengers lamented their approaching fate, ſhe, with a conſcious dignity, told them, their deaths would be only a private loſs; —'But I am a public concern.' The indiſpoſition of Garrick might, more ſeriouſly, be termed ſuch.

Barry's Hotſpur, from his noble figure, rapid and animated expreſſion, and lively action, was pleaſing and reſpectable: but there is a military pride, and camp-humour, if I may be indulged in the expreſſion, to which Barry was a ſtranger. For the ſame reaſon, Mr. Smith's repreſentation of this part, though well marked with fire, impetuoſity, and dignified deportment, is ſomewhat defective.

CHAPTER XII.

Pitiful ambition to gain applauſe.—Gorbellied knaves.—*Lady Percy and Brutus.*—*A green-room quarrel.*—*Five authorities for* rivo.—*Mr. Steevens juſtified.*—*Clement Marot and the weavers.*—Strapado *explained, from Tom Coriat.*—*Improvement on Shakſpeare.*—*Falſtaff's ſuperior wit.*—*Foote and Garrick.*—*A mock-repreſentation of the Prince and King.*—*Extract from Cambyſes.*—*An account of* ſack.—*Briſtol milk.*—*Wine of the ancients.*—*Betterton's Falſtaff.*—*A Dublin paviour an excellent actor.*—*Hiſtory of Falſtaff.*—*Booth, Mills, Quin, Berry, Harper.*—*Henderſon.*

Act II.

The Carriers.

FIRST CARRIER.

Out of all *ceſs.*

THE word *ceſs* is, I believe, derived from *cenſus*, a tax.

SECOND CARRIER.

Lend thee my lantern!
Marry! I'll ſee thee *hang'd* firſt.

From the pitiful ambition of pleaſing the upper gallery, and getting their hands, the actor of the Carrier too often alters the word *hang'd* to *damn'd.*

Enter Chamberlain.

Chamberlain was a kind of upper ſervant, formerly belonging to inns on the road, who attended and waited on travellers as the chambermaids do now. Their office, I believe, extended to the care of every thing belonging to coaches and carriages, which is at preſent the buſineſs of the book-keeper.

GADSHILL.

I am joined with no foot-land-rakers.

Such, I believe, as Falſtaff termed, in a preceding ſcene,

Thieves of the day's beauty.

IDEM.

Such as can hold in.

This is certainly very obſcure. I think Mr. Steevens's ‘ Such as can curb our old father antic the law’ is nearer the author's ſenſe than Mr. Tollet's explanation. By *hold in* is underſtood *hold faſt*. ‘ Such aſſociates have I,’ ſays Gadſhill; ‘ as can maintain their robberies, and will not part with their booty.’

FALSTAFF.

Hang ye, gorbellied knaves.

Not content with explaining the word *gorbellied* by fat and corpulent, which, I believe, every reader of Shakſpeare underſtands without inſtruction, Mr. Steevens not only refers us to Biſhop Kennet's Parochial Antiquities, but lugs in three or four authorities from old plays. Thus is the margin ſometimes enlarged to very little purpoſe.

Scene III. Hotſpur, ſolus.

HOTSPUR.

Have I not all their letters to meet me in arms by the ninth of next month?

This ſcene was neceſſary, to acquaint the audience with the progreſs of the inſurrection projected by the Percys in the laſt ſcene of the firſt act.

LADY PERCY.

O my good lord! why are you thus alone?—
Why haſt thou loſt the freſh blood in thy cheeks;
And giv'n my treaſures and my rights of thee
To thick-ey'd muſing and curs'd melancholy?

Lady Percy's ſpeech is an excellent comment upon Brutus's deſcription of the mind of man when labouring with the impreſſion of a conſpiracy:

Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the firſt motion, all the interim
Is like a phantaſm or a hideous dream.

Small matters, they ſay, often ſerve as preludes to mighty quarrels. In the year 1746, this play was acted at the theatre in Drury-lane. Barry was the Hotſpur; a very beautiful and accompliſhed actreſs condeſcended, in order to give ſtrength to the play, to act the trifling character of Lady Percy; Berry was the Falſtaff. The houſe was far from crouded; for the public could no more bear to ſee another Falſtaff, while Quin was on the ſtage, than they would now flock to ſee a new Shylock, as long as Macklin continues to have ſtrength fit to repreſent '*the Jew which Shakſpeare drew.*'

A very celebrated comic actreſs triumphed in the barrenneſs of the pit and boxes; ſhe threw out ſome expreſſions againſt the conſequence of the

Lady Percy. This produced a very cool, but cutting, anſwer from the other; who reminded the former of her playing, very lately, to a much thinner audience, one of her favourite parts. And now, the ladies not being able to reſtrain themſelves within the bounds of cool converſation, a moſt terrible fray enſued. I do not believe that they went ſo far as pulling of caps, but their altercation would not have diſgraced the females of Billingſgate. While the two great actreſſes were thus entertaining each other in one part of the green-room, the admirer of Lady Percy, an old gentleman who afterwards bequeathed her a conſiderable fortune, and the brother of the comic lady, were more ſeriouſly employed. The cicisbeo ſtruck the other with his cane: thus provoked, he very calmly laid hold of the old man's jaw. 'Let go my jaw, you villain!' and 'Throw down your cane, ſir!' were repeatedly echoed by the combatants.——Barry, who was afraid leſt the audience ſhould hear full as much of the quarrel as of the play, ruſhed into the green-room, and put an end to the battle. The print-ſellers laid hold of this diſpute, and publiſhed a print called 'The Green-room Scuffle.'

Prince Henry and Poins.

PRINCE HENRY.

I am now of all humours that have ſhewed themſelves humours ſince the old days of goodman Adam.

This is the genuine language of a young man whoſe body is vigorous and mind active; who, having more ſpirits than he knows what to do with, and not being engaged by noble exerciſes or generous purſuits, ſpends his hours in idleneſs and frolic.

Rivo. Here we have five authorities, from old plays, to juſtify Shakſpeare's uſe of the word *rivo*.

PRINCE HENRY.

Pitiful-hearted Titan! who melted at the tale of the ſun.

It is impoſſible to make ſenſe of this paſſage as it now ſtands; Mr. Steevens's reſtoration from the old copy, which plainly refers to the ſtory of Phaeton prevailing on Titan to give him the management of his chariot for a day, is, I think, extremely happy.

FALSTAFF.

I woud I were a weaver; I could ſing all manner of ſongs.

It is a common expreſſion this day, in Scotland, to ſay 'pſalm-ſinging weavers.' Clement Marot, who is juſtly eſteemed the firſt poet of his time, and who died in 1544, tranſlated the pſalms into French metre. It was not uncommon to ſet them to muſic and ſing them at the court of Francis I. The Proteſtants of Calvin's perſuaſion had many of them ſet to various tunes, and ſang them in their churches. Thoſe, who were exiled on the repeal of the edict of Nantz, ſang them in all the countries where they were received: in England, Holland, and ſeveral parts of Germany.

IDEM.

Were I at the ſtrapado, I would not tell you on compulſion.

The puniſhment of the *ſtrapado*, as put in practice at Venice in the days of Shakſpeare, is thus deſcribed by Tom Coriat:

"The offender, having his hands bound behind him, is conveyed into a rope that hangeth by a pulley; after which he is raiſed up by two ſeveral ſwings, where he ſuſtaineth ſo great torment, that his joints are for a time looſed and pulled aſunder; beſides which, abundance of blood is gathered into his hands and face. And, for the time he is in the torture, his hands and face look as red as blood."

FALSTAFF.

By the Lord, I knew you as well as he that made you.

The players have, from time immemorial, ſubſtituted in this place ſomething of their own, which, I believe, the ſevereſt critic will not only pardon, but confeſs that it heightens the mirth of the ſcene, and gives a ſtronger colour to the high-ſeaſoned impudence of the fat knight. While the Prince and Poins are teazing Falſtaff to give a plain anſwer to the proofs they produce of his cowardice, he is buſy in hatching up a laugh, in the diſcharge of which he breaks out into this unexpected interrogation: —— 'What! do you think I did not know you? By the Lord, I knew you as well as he that made you.'

It is confeſſed, by all the world, that there is an uncommon force and verſatility in the mirth of Falſtaff, which is ſuperior to all that dramatic poetry has hitherto invented. Prince Henry's converſation is not without wit, and abounds in eaſy pleaſantry and a gay turn: but the Prince ſtands not in need of that ready power of repartee, that impenetrable ſhield of inventive audacity, and that ability to ſhift his ground continually to ward off the blows, to which the lies of Falſtaff inceſſantly expoſe him. The jolly knight is never in a ſtate of humiliation; he generally riſes ſuperior to attack, and gets the laugh on his ſide in ſpite of truth and conviction. It was by this kind of invincible courage in converſation, as well as the quickneſs of his conception and brilliancy of his fancy, that Foote, without the help of Jack Falſtaff's lies, was enabled to riſe up and win the field when his opponents imagined he was laid flat and conquered outright. Garrick had a great ſhare of wit, as well as fine animal ſpirits; but a ſmart blow of a repartee would ſilence him for the evening. If ſuffered to take the lead, he was highly entertaining; but he could not bear interruption.

IDEM.

You muſt to the court in the morning.

This is a preparation for the enſuing pathetic ſcene between the King and Prince.

PRINCE HENRY.

Do thou ſtand for my father, and examine me upon the particulars of my life.

The following mock-repreſentation of an interview between the Prince and his father is generally left out on the ſtage, as an incumbrance to the action. It has been occaſionally revived, but never produced the effect which the admirers of Shakſpeare expected. It is certainly managed with great art, and larded with wit and humour; but it is not heightened with incident, nor ſtuffed with that high jocularity which throws an audience into fits of laughter.

FALSTAFF.

And I will do it in King Cambyſes' vein.

Shakſpeare ridicules, in this paſſage, an old play, of one Thomas Preſton, called 'A lamentable Tragedy, mixed full with Mirth, containing the life of Cambyſes, King of Perſia.'

A taſte of this author's poetry will afford a ſpecimen of the miſerable traſh our anceſtors were forced to ſwallow down.——Tragi-comedy was then the taſte of the nation, as it continues to be now, for the excellency of Shakſpeare's genius has fixed it upon us. Nor is it very ſtrange, when we ſee the politeſt people in Europe obliged to tack a diverting petite piece to make a tragedy palatable to the audience. The Spaniards, too, will not be ſatisfied without a daſh of buffoonry added to their more ſerious pieces.

Extract from Cambyſes.

My council grave and ſapient,
With lords of legal train,
Attentive ears towards us bend,
And hear what ſhall be ſain:
So you, likewiſe, my valiant knight,
Whoſe manly acts doth fly,
By bruit of fame, the ſounding trump
Doth pierce the azure ſky.

The laſt editors have quoted a line or two of this curious piece; I thought a little larger ſample would do juſtice to the genius of Maſter Preſton. Mr. Steevens relates, that Queen Elizabeth was ſo well pleaſed with his acting a part before her at the univerſity of Cambridge, that ſhe ſettled 20l. per annum on Preſton; and this, he ſays, was little more than 1s. per diem. In thoſe days of ſtrict œconomy, 20l. was a conſiderable penſion: I queſtion if Roger Aſcham's ſtipend was more than twice that ſum, who was the queen's preceptor in the learned languages.

FALSTAFF.

If ſack and ſugar be a fault.

At this diſtance of time, it is not an eaſy matter to determine what ſort of wine this ſack was, of which our anceſtors were ſo fond. By the knight's mixing it with ſugar, it can ſcarcely anſwer Dr. Johnſon's definition, who calls it 'a ſweet wine chiefly brought from the Canaries.' Minſhew derives the word *ſeck* from *ſeccare, propter magnam ſeccandi humores facultatem*: to this derivation Falſtaff would himſelf have no objection. Skinner thinks the word *ſack* takes its name from the Spaniſh *ſecco, dry*, having a rough and ſharp quality. The conjecture of Mandelſo is, that *ſack* is derived from *Xeque*, a city of Mauritania, and thence tranſplanted into Spain. After all, the ſame learned Dr. Skinner calls ſherry *ſherry-ſack*, a well-known wine, derived from *Xeres*, formerly Eſcuris, in the province of Andaluſia. Falſtaff himſelf, in his profuſe commendations of ſherry, terms it ‘ a good ſherris-ſack,’ as if there were two ſorts of ſack, and he gave the preference to the ſherris. Blount, in his Gloſſography, ſays, ‘ that ſherris-ſack is ſo called from Xeres, a ſea-town of Corduba, in Spain, where that kind of ſherris is made.’

That the ſack, of which our anceſtors drank, had a tartneſs in it, ſeems evident from their mixing ſugar with it. All wine-merchants, as well as old topers, are agreed, that at preſent we have none of that excellent ſherry which was drank ſo plentifully about forty or fifty years ſince, and which was called *Briſtol milk*, from a common practice of the inhabitants of that city, who generouſly preſented ſtrangers with a glaſs of that pleaſant wine.

The liquor, which Homer pours out ſo abundantly, is old wine, and yet he calls it ηδυς, *dulcis*.

Οινοιο παλαιȣ ηδυποτοιȣ.

ODYSS. Lib. II.

It cannot be ſuppoſed that old wine could really be ſweet wine, becauſe age gives it a tartneſs. It is obſerved, by a French critic, that the word ηδυς, or *dulcis*, ſhould be tranſlated *pleaſant*, or *agreeable*; becauſe, ſays he, that ſharpneſs, which was the conſequence of wine's being kept long, ſeemed to be a quality very agreeable to the ancients. *Hiſt. crit. de la République des Lettres*, tom. I. p. 240.

For ſome time after the union of the king's and duke of York's companies of comedians, Betterton, with general approbation, acted Hotſpur; a character which, according to the laws eſtabliſhed then by the lord-chamberlain, he was not permitted to attempt during the time Hart continued to act; the play of Henry IV. Firſt Part, being aſſigned to the king's company. Towards the decline of his life, Betterton relinquiſhed Hotſpur to try his abilities in Falſtaff; and, in this change of character, his powers of pleaſing did not forſake him; being a perfect maſter of his profeſſion, he wore the ſock with as much eaſe and grace as the buſkin. With the greateſt ſtock of merit, this conſummate comedian poſſeſſed an equal ſhare of modeſty. He was ever open to advice, and refuſed it from no man who offered it.

In the beginning of this, or the end of the laſt century, Ben Jonſon, the actor, took a trip to Dublin, where his great merit gained him much applauſe with conſiderable profit.

There he ſaw a comic actor whom he much admired, one Baker, a maſter-paviour of Dublin. He excelled in Sir Epicure Mammon in the Alchemiſt, in the Spaniſh Frier, and more eſpecially in Falſtaff. Baker would ſtudy his parts while ſurveying his workmen in the ſtreets. This practice was once the occaſion of a very whimſical adventure. Two of his men, who had been lately hired from Cheſter, and were ſtrangers to their new maſter's cuſtom, obſerving one day his countenance and geſtures, while talking to himſelf, imagined that he was ſeized with madneſs. He, on taking notice of their attention, bade them mind their buſineſs. They obeyed, — but ſtill kept a watchful eye on him, who was rehearſing to himſelf the part of Falſtaff. He was in that ſcene where the knight ſurveys the dead body of Sir Walter Blunt, —and ſaying, *Who have we here, Sir Walter Blunt? There's honour for you!* Upon this, the fellows laid hold of their maſter, and, by the help of the byſtanders, tied him hand and foot, and, in ſpite of his reſiſtance, carried him home with a great mob at his heels *.

Jonſon communicated to Betterton this actor's manner of perſonating Falſtaff, which he not only approved, but adopted; and frankly owned that the paviour's drawing of Sir John was more characteriſtical than his own.

George Powell, who was malicious enough to envy this great actor, and weak enough to think himſelf capable of ſupplying his place, during the life of Betterton acted Falſtaff in his particular manner; and, to take all advantages, he mimicked him in thoſe acute pains of the gout which ſometimes ſurpriſed him in the time of action.

Since the death of Betterton, in April, 1710, many comedians of Drury-lane Theatre have tried their ſkill in Falſtaff; but moſt of them with very indifferent ſucceſs. By the particular command of Queen Anne, Booth ventured to put on the habit of Falſtaff, for *one night only*. That he did not venture a ſecond attempt might be owing either to a conſcious deficiency to aſſume Falſtaff's humour, or a predilection for Hotſpur in the ſame play. The elder Mills would likewiſe try his ſkill in comic archery, and handled, for a few nights, this bow of Ulyſſes. But, alas, in vain! His ſober gravity could not reach the inimitable mirth of this ſtage-prodigy. Harper's fat figure, full voice, round face, and honeſt laugh, rather than his intelligence, fixed him at laſt in the jolly knight's eaſy chair.

The company of comedians which began to act under the management of John Rich, from a patent of Charles II. in 1715, though conſiſting of ſome good old players, from recruits picked up from all parts of the country, and the diſcontents of

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* Chetwood's Hiſtory of the Stage.

Drury-lane, were, for a long time, unable to cope with the eſtabliſhed comedians of the laſt-mentioned theatre. Lincoln's-inn Fields houſe was finely decorated. The ſcenes were new. The ſtage was more extended than that of the rival theatre, ſuperbly adorned with looking-glaſs on both ſides of the ſtage; a circumſtance, which Quin ſaid was an excellent trap to catch actreſſes who admired their perſons more than their profeſſion of acting. But, when the novelty was worn away, the audiences forſook the new company for their old friends at Drury-lane.

The firſt play acted at Lincoln's-inn Fields, which fixed the attention of the public, was The merry Wives of Windſor. This comedy was ſo perfectly played in all its parts, that the critics in acting univerſally celebrated the merit of the performers*. the characters were ſo well adapted to the abilities of the actors, that no play had been repreſented with equal ſkill and propriety at that theatre.

The great applauſe Quin gained in this, the feebleſt portrait of Falſtaff, encouraged him to venture on the moſt high-ſeaſoned part of the character, in the Firſt Part of Henry IV. Of this large compound of lies, bragging and exhauſtleſs fund of wit and humour, Quin poſſeſſed the oſtenſible or mechanical part in an eminent degree. In perſon he was tall and bulky: his voice ſtrong and pleaſing: his countenance manly, and his eye piercing and expreſſive. In ſcenes, where ſatire and ſarcaſm were poignant, he greatly excelled; particularly, in The Witty Triumph over Bardolph's dolph's carbuncles, and the fooleries of the hoſteſs. In the whole part he was animated, though not equally happy. His ſupercilious look, in ſpite of aſſumed gaiety, ſometimes unmaſked the ſurlineſs of his diſpoſition; however, he was, notwithſtanding ſome faults, eſteemed the moſt intelligent and judicious Falſtaff ſince the days of Betterton. Berry, who ſucceeded Quin at Drury-lane, was neither exact in his outline nor warm in his colouring. *He* was indeed, the Falſtaff of a beer-houſe; while the *other* was the dignified Preſident, where the choiceſt viands and the beſt liquors were to be had. Love, who came next in order at Drury-lane, wanted not a good ſhare of vis comica, and laughed with eaſe and gaiety. To paſs by Ned Shuter's exhibition of this favourite part would be unpardonable. What Ned wanted in judgment he ſupplied by archneſs and drollery. He enjoyed the effects of his roguery with a chuckle of his own compounding, and rolled his full eye, when detected, with a moſt laughable effect. Woodward and Yates put on Falſtaff's habit for one night only. Their reſpect for the judgment of the audience prevented their aſſuming the boldneſs of the character. I think their diffidence was greater than their deficiencies. Theſe excellent comic actors might, by repeated practice, have reached the mark which they modeſtly deſpaired to hit.

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* Falſtaff, Quin; Ford, Ryan; Page, Ogden; Sir Hugh Evans, Hippeſley; Juſtice Shallow, Boheme; Slender, Chriſtopher Bullock; hoſt of the garter, old Bullock; Dr. Caius, Egleton; Mrs. Ford, Mrs. Seymour; Mrs. Page, Mrs. Bullock; Mrs. Quickly, Mrs. Egleton.

The preſent age has, in my opinion, produced a Falſtaff who has more of the pleſant and gay features of the character than any actor I have yet ſeen. I know very well that ſome of the ſurviving companions of Quin will pronounce it theatrical treaſon to ſuppoſe that it was poſſible for this character to ſurvive their departed friend. But Nature is not ſo niggardly in her productions. The riſing generation may ſee new Garricks, Barrys, Cibbers, and Quins. While I am writing this, a great a great and admirable genius has ſtruck the world with admiration.—Mrs. Siddons is the lawful ſucceſſor of our moſt perfect actreſſes. Much is ſaid of old ſchools and new ſchools in acting: this lady is the great ornament of Nature's ſchool, which will eternally be the ſame.—But to return to my ſubject.

Henderſon had many difficulties to conquer before he could bring Falſtaff within his grapple: neither in perſon, voice, nor countenance, did he ſeem qualified for the part. By the aſſiſtance of a moſt excellent judgment he has contrived to ſupply all deficiencies. In the impudent dignity, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, of the character, Quin greatly excelled all competitors. In the frolickſome, gay, and humorous ſituations of Falſtaff, Henderſon is ſuperior to every man.

From his figure, and other outward accompliſhments, Falſtaff ſeems to have courted Quin to embrace him; while Henderſon was obliged to force him into his ſervice. Quin's ſupercilious manner was of uſe to him in ſcenes where he wiſhed to overawe his companions into compliance with his humour. Henderſon's gay levity was beſt ſuited to midnight pleaſure and riotous mirth.

The maſter-action of Quin was the detection of his cowardice by the Prince and Poins, in the ſecond Act; and though, in this, Henderſon ſhews much art and true humour, yet his ſoliloquy in deſcribing his ragamuffin regiment, and his enjoying the miſuſe of the king's preſs-money, are ſo truly excellent, that they are not inferior to any comic repreſentation of the ſtage.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mortimer, Hotſpur, and Owen Glendower.—The ſcene between them generally omitted in repreſentation.—Meaning of the word lewd.—*Courteſy from heaven.—Mr. Steevens and Mr. Malone.—Robe pontifical.—*Favours in a bloody maſk *explained.—Curious extract from Hollingſhead.—Obſervation on the interview between the king and prince.——Wilks, his excellence in the prince of Wales.—Mr. Lewis and Mr. Palmer.—*The inſide of a church,—A brewer's horſe,--Artificial noſes,---Stew'd prunes,—*and the word* quailing, *explained—Nimbleneſs of Prince Henry.—Accurate account of the oſtrich.—Death of Hotſpur.—Falſtaff and Hotſpur.——The difficulty of raiſing a dead body on a living ſhoulder.—Henderſon and Smith.*

Act III. Scene I. Hotſpur, Worceſter, Mortimer, Glendower.

THIS Interview of the principal conſpirators has been often preſented to the public, but could not preſerve a permanent ſtation on the ſtage. It ſeems of great uſe in the œconomy of the play, to unfold the progreſs of the rebellion, and to diſplay the paſſions and intereſts of the ſeveral perſons concerned in it. By the amputation of this ſcene, Hotſpur's part appeared to be ſo maimed, that Mr. Garrick inſiſted on its being revived. However, after the firſt or ſecond night's acting, finding that it produced no effect, he conſented to omit it. If I remember right, Colley Cibber formerly played Owen Glendower. The necromantic forgeries and vain boaſtings of the Welchman are well contraſted with the blunt humour and contemptuous diſdain of Hotſpur.

Scene II. King and Prince of Wales.

KING.

To puniſh my miſtreadings!

In this, and the former part of the ſpeech, where Henry ſpeaks of the diſpleaſing ſervice he had done, Shakſpeare, I believe, alludes to his depoſing and murdering of Richard II. The poet, agreeably to hiſtory, makes him keep his great offences to his ſovereign conſtantly in mind; and Henry's continual compunction and remorſe leſſens our hatred to the uſurper.

IDEM.

———Such lewd, ſuch mean attempts!

The word *lewd* has, in Shakſpeare, various meanings; ſuch as *impudent*, *illiberal*, *licentious*, and *wanton*. Verſtegan proves that it originally ſignified *ignorant*; here, as Mr. Steevens obſerves, it ſtands for *licentious*.

IDEM.

And then I ſtole all courteſy from heaven.

Mr. Steevens has juſtified Dr. Warburton, who ſays our poet in this alludes to the ſtory of Prometheus ſtealing fire from heaven, by producing a parallel paſſage from Maſſinger's Duke of Florence, which proves this author underſtood it in that ſenſe, by uſing the very words of Shakſpeare. But Mr. Malone denies that Shakſpeare dreamt in the leaſt of the fable of Prometheus, and inſiſts that Henry means that he robbed heaven of its worſhip, as he did his fellow-ſubjects of their allegiance.

This is certainly more than the author intended. Courteſy for devotion is ſurely ſomewhat ſtrained. The progreſs, from courteſy to humility, is natural enough; that Prometheus's ſtealing fire from heaven was not unfamiliar to Shakſpeare, can be proved from a ſimilar expreſſion in Othello.

> ——But once put out thy light,
> Thou cunning'ſt pattern of excelling Nature,
> I know not where is that *Promethean* heat
> That can thy light relumine!
>
> OTHELLO, Act. V.

IDEM.

> My preſence, like a robe pontifical.

Such as popes, patriarchs, and archbiſhops, wear only at high maſs.

Lord Bolingbroke on being once preſent at high maſs, in the church of Notre Dame in Paris, was ſo greatly delighted with the high ceremony and ſolemn muſic, that he declared, if he had been king of France, he would alſo have officiated as pontiff.

PRINCE OF WALES.

> Stain my favours in a bloody maſk!

This is to be underſtood in the ſame ſenſe as the following paſſage relating to the ſame prince of Wales in Richard II. Act V. of whom, it is ſaid, that he declared,

> ———He would unto the ſtews,
> And from the common'ſt creature pluck a glove,
> And wear it as a favour, with that
> He would unhorſe the luſtieſt challenger.

This admirable ſcene between King Henry and his ſon owes its origin to a very extraordinary and pathetic interview of theſe great perſonages, which happened about a year before the death of the king. Shakſpeare does not always obſerve the order of time, but frequently ſelects ſituations and events to ſuit his own plan. The particulars are thus recorded by Hollingſhead and Stowe.

"That Henry, Prince of Wales, being informed, that certain ill-minded perſons had not only ſpread abroad very ill reports of him, but had endeavoured to ſow diſſenſion between the king, his father, and himſelf; he wrote public letters to clear his reputation; and, to free himſelf the better from ſuch aſperſions, on the 29th of June, 1412, he came to the court with certain noblemen and others his friends.—He was dreſſed in a gown of blue ſattin, full of ſmall eyelets, at every hole the needle hanging by a ſilk thread. About his arm he wore a hound's collar ſet full of SS of gold. The court was then at Weſtminſter. The retinue of the prince, in obedience to his commands, would advance no farther than the fire-place, though frequently requeſted by the lords in waiting. The prince himſelf, accompanied with ſome of the king's houſehold, was admitted to his royal father; who, in the preſence of three or four perſons, commanded him to tell the cauſe of his coming to him.

"The prince kneeling down before his father, ſaid, — Moſt redoubted and ſovereign lord and father, I am at this time come to your preſence as your liegeman and your natural ſon, in all things to be at your commandment; and, whereas I underſtand you have in ſuſpicion my demeanor againſt your grace, you know very well, that, if I knew any man in this realm of whom you ſhould ſtand in fear, my duty were to puniſh that perſon, thereby to remove that grief from your heart; then how much more ought I ſuffer death to eaſe your grace of that grief which you have of me, being your natural ſon and liegeman; and to that end I have made myſelf ready, by confeſſing and receiving the ſacrament; and therefore I beſeech you, moſt redoubted lord and dear father, for the honour of God, to eaſe your heart of all ſuch ſuſpicion you have of me, and to diſpatch me here with this ſame dagger, (and withal delivered to the king his dagger, in all humble reverence, adding farther, that his life was not ſo dear to him that he wiſhed to live one day with his diſpleaſure;) and, therefore, in this ridding me out of life, and yourſelf from all ſuſpicion, here, in preſence of theſe lords, and before God, at the day of the general judgment, I faithfully proteſt clearly to forgive you.

"The king, herewith moved, caſt from him the dagger, and, embracing the prince, kiſſed him; and, with ſhedding tears, confeſſed that indeed he had him partly in ſuſpicion, though now, as he perceived, not with juſt cauſe; and from thenceforth no report ſhould have him in miſtruſt; and this he promiſed from his honour."

In this ſcene, between the King and Prince, Shakſpeare has not uſed one harſh or obſcure word; the language is clear, flowing, and majeſtic, well adapted to character. Though it is little more than a fine picture of ſtill life, not blended with pity or terror, the great ingredients of tragic paſſion, by the admirable ſkill of the writer it is rendered abundantly intereſting and affecting.

I have already obſerved that Winterſhul, who firſt acted the King after the Reſtoration, was a comedian of merit. Cibber draws a maſterly picture of Kynaſton's behaviour in this ſcene, to which I muſt refer the reader.

The elder Mills wanted dignity of deportment neceſſary to repreſent the grandeur and majeſty of the character, which were eminently ſupplied by Boheme.——Havard was decent, but without ſpirit; Benſley is chiefly deficient in perſon.—The Prince of Wales by Wilks was one of the moſt perfect exhibitions of the theatre. Wilks threw aſide the libertine gaiety of Hal, when he aſſumed the princely deportment of Henry. At the Boar's Head he was lively and frolicſome; in the reconciliation with his father, his penitence was gracefully becoming, and his reſolution of amendment manly and affecting. In his challenge of Hotſpur, his defiance was equally gallant and modeſt. In his combat with that nobleman, his fire was tempered with moderation, and his reflections on the death of the great rebel, generous and pathetic. The Hotſpur of Booth, though a noble portrait of courage, humour, and gallantry, was not ſuperior to the Prince of Wales by Wilks. It is no diſgrace to Mr. Lewis and Mr. Palmer, who are both actors of great merit, and deſerve much commendation in their ſeveral repreſentations of Prince Henry, to be inferior to the accompliſhed Wilks.

FALSTAFF.

And I have not forgotten the inſide of a church I am a pepper-corn, a brewer's horſe! The inſide of a church!

It requires no ſagacity to ſee that the *inſide of a church* is not one of his vile compariſons, as Prince Henry termed the knight's ſimiles in a former ſcene; it is certainly a repetition of his confeſſing that he was utterly unacquainted with any place of devotion.—I believe, in the days of Shakſpeare, brewers horſes did not reſemble thoſe of our days; they were probably poor jades, worn out with ſervice; and therefore the compariſon of the fat Falſtaff with a lean Roſinante is not ſo idle. In the reign of Henry IV. the buſineſs of brewing was carried on by females.* Whether the men chiefly employed themſelves, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, in the occupation of brewing, I know not.

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* Henry's Hiſtory of Great-Britain.

HOSTESS.

You owe me money, Sir John: and now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it.

This is a good preparative for the arreſt of Falſtaff in the Second Part of Henry IV.

FALSTAFF.

Let him coin his noſe.

In Shakſpeare's time, a large carbuncled noſe was a richer joke than it is now, as may appear from this ſarcaſtical deſcription of one by Falſtaff. For ſuch characters as the Jew of Malta and Bardolph, the actors made uſe of artificial noſes*.

IDEM.

There is no more faith in thee than in a *ſtewed prune.*

To explain at full what is meant by *ſtewed prunes,* Mr. Steevens has given no leſs than fourteen authorities from old books and plays. I would recommend to that gentleman to be content with one half of theſe quotations; which, with Dr. Farmer's account of the price of a ſtewed prune, will, I think, ſatisfy every reaſonable man.

Act IV. Scene I.

HOTSPUR.

There is no *quailing* now.

The word *quailing* is very expreſſive, and taken from the nature of the *quail*; which of all birds is one of the moſt timorous as well as laſcivious.

" The Arabs, ſays, Dr. Shaw, do not ſpring game with dogs; but, ſhading themſelves with a piece of canvas ſtretched upon two reeds into the ſhade of a door, they walk through avenues where they expect to find it. The canvas is uſually ſpotted, ed, or painted with the figure of a leopard; and, a little below the top, there is one or more holes, for the fowler to look through and ſee what paſſes before him. Quails, and ſuch-like birds as do not feed in flocks, will, upon ſight of the canvas, *ſtand ſtill and look aſtoniſhed.* This gives the ſportſman an opportunity of coming very near them; and then, reſting the canvas upon the ground, and directing the muzzle of his piece through one of the holes, knocks down ſometimes a whole covey of them."

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* Vide Mr. Read's note on a paſſage in the Jew of Malta.

Shaw's Travels.

With the Egyptians, the quail was an emblem of impiety; the voice of that bird was ſuppoſed to be diſpleaſing to the gods.

Scene IV.

WORCESTER.

We of the offering ſide.

That is, we who make propoſals for alteration of government, and offer new terms to the people: ſuch as a king with a juſter title to the crown than he has whom we call uſurper; and many other new articles to gain the public favour and aſſiſtance.

HOTSPUR.

The nimble footed mad-cap Prince of Wales.

Shakſpeare rarely beſtows his epithets at random, ſays Mr. Steevens. Mr. Bowle had made an obſervation ſomething like this upon a ſimilar paſſage in the ſecond act of this play. But, although I am willing to grant his highneſs was as ſwift-footed as Achilles, yet I hope I ſhall be excuſed from giving credit to what is quoted gravely from an hiſtorian: for, if Hal himſelf would not believe that Hotſpur could 'ride up a hill perpendicular, and kill a ſparrow flying,'—neither will I ſubſcribe to a writer who tells us, that ‘ Henry Prince of Wales, and his companions, would run after a ſtag, and take him, without hounds, or any weapon whatſoever.’

VERNON.

All plum'd like eſtridges.

The beſt and moſt accurate account we have of the oſtrich is to be found in Dr. Shaw's Travels, which is indeed a good commentary on ſeveral verſes of the 39th chapter of Job. As that learned writer's deſcription is taken from his own perſonal knowledge, I ſhall quote a paſſage relating to the uncommon ſwiftneſs and beauty of the oſtrich.

“ When any of theſe birds are ſurpriſed, by coming ſuddenly upon them, whilſt they are feeding in ſome valley, or behind ſome rocky or ſmall emnience in the deſerts, they will not ſtay to be curiouſly viewed and examined; neither are the Arabs dextrous enough to overtake them, though they are mounted upon their jinſes, or horſes of family. *They, when they raiſe themſelves up for flight, laugh at the horſe and his rider.** They afford him an opportunity only of admiring, at a diſtance, the extraordinary agility, and the ſtatelineſs likewiſe, of their motions; the richneſs of their plumage, and the great propriety there was of aſcribing to them *an expanded quivering wing.*† Nothing certainly can be more beautiful and entertaining than ſuch a ſight: the wings, by their repeated, though unwearied, vibrations, equally ſerving them for ſails and oars; whilſt their feet, no leſs aſſiſting in conveying them out of ſight, are no leſs inſenſible of fatigue.” Shaw's Travels into Africa.

HOTSPUR.

Taſk'd the whole ſtate.

Taſked is a word, in the old Chronicles, for *taxed*

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* Job, ch. xxxix. verſe 18.

† Verſe 13.

IDEM.

——— To ſeek out
This head of ſafety. ———

So Worceſter, in the laſt ſcene of the firſt act:

And it is no little reaſon bids us ſpeed,
To ſave our heads by raiſing of a head.

Act V. Scene II.

PRINCE HENRY.

Heaven forbid a ſhallow ſcratch ſhould drive
The Prince of Wales from ſuch a field as this.

Henry was preſent, though then very young, being ſcarcely fifteen years of age, at the battle of Shrewſbury; where he fought bravely, and was wounded: he would not leave the field of battle, though earneſtly intreated by ſeveral of the nobility.

IDEM.

And now two paces of the vileſt earth
Is room enough. ——

——— *Mors ſola fatetur*
Quantula ſint hominum corpuſcula. ——

JUVENAL, Sat. X.

The King, according to Hall, who is copied by Hollingſhead, fought very ſtoutly, and killed, with his own hand, thirty-ſix of the rebels. Though the ſame authors expreſs themſelves ſomewhat obſcurely, yet we may gather from the context that Percy was ſlain by the Prince of Wales. Stowe ſays, that Hotſpur, running forward amongſt the thickeſt of the enemy, was ſlain.

FALSTAFF.

Therefore, ſirrah, with a new wound in your thigh, &c.

A man of genius has taken pains to reſcue the character of Falſtaff from the charge of cowardice;

dice;* not conſidering, that, if the knight is proved to be a man of courage, half the mirth he raiſes is quite loſt and miſplaced. The Prince and Poins obtained, by their contrivance, ſuch evident proofs of his daſtardly ſpirit, that the whole mirth, in the admired ſcene of his detected tergiverſation, depends upon it. Old Jack is ſo fairly hunted down, by the plain tale and keen reproaches of the Prince, that he is reduced to the neceſſity of excuſing his want of courage, by attributing his fear to inſtinct: but, if any proof of his timidity be yet wanting, we have, in this ſcene, ſuch as bids defiance to all queſtion; for Falſtaff, not ſatisfied with ſeeing the dead body of Percy before him, to make all ſure, wounds the corps in the thigh. Nobody, I believe, is angry that he afterwards ſwears he killed him. I cannot think the author of the Eſſay on the Character of Falſtaff intended any thing more, by his argument, than to convince the public that he was very competent to ſupport any hypotheſis by brilliancy of wit and plauſibility of argument.

IDEM.

I'll follow, as they ſay, for the hope of reward!

No joke ever raiſed ſuch loud and repeated mirth, in the galleries, as Sir John's labour in getting the body of Hotſpur on his back. If Hotſpur and Falſtaff had been on ill terms, or any quarrel had taken place between them, the hero, if he was ſo inclined, could have teazed the fat knight in ſuch a manner as to have given him no little vexation. How Booth and Harper managed this pantomimic ſcene is not very eaſy to tell. Booth's weight and roundneſs of figure would render the bulky Harper's lifting him on his back worſe than walking a hundred yards on uneven ground. Quin had little or no difficulty in perching Garrick upon his ſhoulders, who looked like a dwarf on the back of a giant. But oh! how he tugged and toiled to raiſe Barry from the ground! As they were rivals, and ſometimes jarred, we may, without breach of charity, ſuppoſe, that Hotſpur ſometimes enjoyed the ſweat of Falſtaff .If the dead man was not friendly to the living, he might have made the weighing him up an Herculean labour.

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* Eſſay on the Character of Falſtaff.

At length this upper-gallery merriment was done away by the difficulties which Henderſon encountered in getting Smith on his ſhoulders. So much time was conſumed in this pick-a-pack buſineſs, that the ſpectators grew tired, or rather diſguſted. It was thought beſt, for the future, that ſome of Falſtaff's ragamuffins ſhould bear off the dead body.

Scene the laſt.

KING.

I'll-ſpirited Worceſter, did we not ſend grace,
Pardon, and love, to all of you!——

This reproof of Worceſter's malignity is agreeable to hiſtorical fact.

King Henry IV. Second Part.

CHAPTER XIV.

Second Part of Henry IV. *owing to the ſucceſs of the firſt.—When regiſtered.—Shakſpeare's age.—Ben Jonſon.—Rumour.—Dr. Johnſon's diſtribution of certain lines.—*Mandrake *explained.—Walkers in St. Paul's.—All ſingle combatants give the lie.—Remark on the word* old.*—The original actor of Falſtaff.—Hunt counter.—Single wit.—Boman the actor.—Text reſtored.—Quean and Queller.—Fuſtilarian.—Cards eaten by a gameſter.—Propoſed alteration of the text.—Lady Percy and Northumberland.—Piſtol and Theophilus Cibber.—Stage Mutineers.*

THE ſucceſs of the Firſt Part of Henry IV. muſt have been uncommon, for it appears, from Mr. Malone's Chronological ſeries of our author's plays, that it was entered into the Stationers books in the beginning of the year 1598, entitled the Hiſtory of Henry IV. The writer did not, at that time, perhaps, foreſee that he ſhould be encouraged to continue the ſtory. However, the Second Part of Henry IV. was regiſtered, in the ſame book, in the beginning of the year 1599. Shakſpeare was not more than thirty-four years old when theſe admirable productions of his genius were exhibited. If I could poſſibly envy the pleaſures which the audiences enjoyed in old times, it would be for that inconceivable delight which intelligent auditors muſt have felt at the firſt acting of Shakſpeare's nobleſt dramas. Methinks I ſee and hear the tumultuous joy and thundering applauſe which the unparalleled character of Falſtaff muſt have afforded at his firſt repreſentation! A character, ſo ſuperior to the conception of the brighteſt fancy, muſt have ſtruck them with aſtoniſhment! To have ſeen Ben Jonſon, with an aſſumed countenance of gaiety, and with envy in his heart, join the groupe of laughers and applauders, muſt have added to the pleaſure of our author's real friends and admirers.

The Prologue.

Rumour is ſo eaſy and plain a *ſtop*,
——— The wavering multitude
Can play upon it.

Rumour is here compared to a muſical inſtrument. So Hamlet, in ſhewing a flute to Guilderſtern:

Can you play upon this pipe?
Why, 'tis as eaſy as lying.
Look you, theſe *are the ſtops.*

Act I. Scene I.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

——— Every minute now
Should be the father of ſome ſtratagem.

That is, ſhould bring forth ſome great event.

IDEM.

——— Ha! ——— Again! ———
Said he young Harry Percy's ſpur was cold?

Northumberland, by the word *again*, calls upon Travers to repeat what the man on horſeback ſaid of Harry Percy.

IDEM.

So looks the ſtrond, whereon th'imperious flood
Hath left a witneſs'd uſurpation.

The mind's diſtreſs, when ſtrongly pictured o'the countenance, is finely expreſſed by Otway, in his Venice Preſerved.

Then, Jaffier, ſhouldſt thou not wear
Thoſe *ſeals of woe* upon thy face.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Yet, for all this, ſay not that Percy's dead!

Dr. Johnſon would give this line to Bardolph: however, he does not offer to alter the text, but candidly propoſes a mode of diſtributing the parts of the ſpeech, which he thinks belong to ſeveral interlocutors. I cannot ſee any advantage to be gained by it. Grief is talkative, and can bear no interruption. Cibber, in adapting this ſcene to the circumſtance of Prince Edward's murder, in the tragedy of Richard III. has given this line to King Henry, the father of Edward, and has thereby rendered the ſcene more affecting. Morton is, I think, too much overwhelmed with the weight of his unhappy tidings to reaſon ſo concluſively and coolly as, in the lines which Dr. Johnſon gives to him. Lord Bardolph very properly breaks ſilence, by ſaying,

I cannot think, my lord, your ſon is dead.

Great part of this ſcene between Northumberland and Travers is not unſkilfully woven into the firſt act of Cibber's alteration of Richard III. and applied to Henry VI.'s lamentation for the murder of his ſon. The celebrated imprecation of Northumberland, ſo deſervedly praiſed by Addiſon and Dr. Johnſon, Cibber would not loſe; he tranſplanted ſeveral lines of it into his fourth act, and with the remainder he cloſed the dying ſpeech of Richard.

Scene II. Falſtaff and Page.

FALSTAFF.

Thou whoreſon mandrake,

Mandrake is an herb of a narcotic and cold quality; eſpecially the root, which is large and ſhaped like thoſe of a parſnip, carrot, white briony, &c. and, in old times, has been applied to deaden pain in parts to be opened or cut off. Its roots are ſometimes forked; which made the fruitful heads of antiquity fancy they were like the legs and thighs of man, and derive its Greek name, *quaſi* Andragora, *quod inter eradicandum ejulatur et humanam refert vocem.* Pythagoras calls it Anthropomorphus; Columella, Semihomo; Albertus de Mandragora, Druſius de Monſtris, Kircherus de Magia Paraſtatica, Pliny, (Nat. Hiſt.) and others, have run into the ſame conceit. The ancients believed it grew only at places of execution, out of the urine and fat of the dead; that, in eradication, it ſhrieked; and that it brought calamity on ſuch as pulled or dug it up: to prevent which diſaſters, Pliny gives directions at large to be obſerved in pulling it.

Cunning impoſtors have confirmed theſe errors, by chooſing forked roots out of it, and carving, in ſome, the generative parts of men; in others, thoſe of women; and putting into ſmall holes, made in proper places, the grains of millet, barley, or the like, and ſetting them in a moiſt place till they grew and ſent forth blades; which, when dried, looked like hair. For the diſcovery of theſe cheats, we are beholden to Matthioli, Crollius, Sir Thomas Brown, and others. *Murphy's Lucian, note to Timon Miſanthropos.*

Machiavel wrote a diverting, but very licentious comedy, called Mandragora.

IDEM.

To bear a gentleman in hand.

To bear a gentleman in hand ſignifies not only keeping him in expectation, but alſo with the farther

ther deſign not to comply with the gentleman's requeſt.

IDEM.

I bought him in Paul's.

That is, *I picked him up there.* That St. Paul's Church-yard was, till the latter end of Queen Anne's reign, a common reſort for all ſorts of people we find from Pope's Eſſay on Criticiſm:

Nor is Paul's church more free than Paul's Church-yard.

In Shakſpeare's time, it was not only a place for idle people, cheats, and knights of the poſt, but for politicians, courtiers, and others, who met there to hear court and city news, and diſcuſs political matters. This information Oſborne gives us, who was himſelf an ambulator in St. Paul's.

IDEM.

You lie in your throat if you ſay I am any other.

The lie direct preceded, or accompanied, all challenges from the combatants, with ſand bags, to kings, and emperors, who fought armed at all points. Francis I. king of France, and Charles V. emperor of Germany, gave and returned the lie to each other with equal brutality.

FALSTAFF.

Very well, my lord, very well.

Mr. Theobald's remark that the word *old,* in the quarto edition, placed before this ſpeech, refers to the word *Oldcaſtle,* cannot eaſily be refuted. Mr. Steevens's obſervation that *old* might ſtand for the beginning of an actor's ſurname is not very ſolid. The actor of Falſtaff was undoubtedly Lowin. On looking over the ſeveral liſts of actors names fixed to the editions of Shakſpeare, Ben Jonſon, and

Beaumont and Fletcher, there is not one which begins with *Old*.

IDEM.

——You hunt counter.

With ſubmiſſion to Dr. Johnſon and Mr. Steevens, I think Falſtaff by *hunt counter* alludes to the buſineſs of Tipſtaff, who, by the judges warrants, conveys offenders to ſafe cuſtody. The chief juſtice talks of puniſhing Falſtaff by the heels; and, if he had put his threat into execution, the officer then preſent with him muſt have been employed in that ſervice. The head of the law, in this ſcene, does not appear in the character of a private gentleman, but dreſſed in his robes of office, and, conſequently, with proper attendants to commit delinquents to priſon.

CHIEF JUSTICE.

Your wit is ſingle.

I am always diffident in my opinion when I cannot aſſent to the judgment of two ſuch eminent critics as Dr. Johnſon and Mr. Steevens. The firſt ſuppoſes that, by *ſingle wit*, Shakſpeare means that which is unfaſhionable; and the latter, that Falſtaff had more fat than wit. The chief juſtice, in my opinion, intends to reproach him with being ſolely maſter of that wit which promoted diſſipation, licentiouſneſs, and debauchery. That his ideas and practice were perfectly conformable, he was become ſo habituated to looſe diſcourſe and a profligate mode of living, that he could not reform. In ſhort, ſays the chief juſtice, your wit is confined to one ſubject, you are a perfect ſtranger to reaſoning on any topic, except that which is connected with luxury, and leads to the tavern or the bawdy-houſe.

The character of the chief juſtice, in this play, is that of grave dignity, and of authority tempered with lenity. It was rendered important, many years ſince, by Mr. Boman, the contemporary of Betterton; who maintained the ſerious deportment of the judge with the graceful eaſe of the gentleman.

Scene III. Archbiſhop of York, Haſtings, Mowbray, and Lord Bardolph.

HASTINGS.

——— It never yet did hurt
To lay down likelihoods and forms of hope.

LORD BARDOLPH.

Yes, in this preſent quality of war,
Indeed of inſtant action.

Mr. Pope altered the reading of the two laſt lines thus:

Yes, if this preſent quality of war
Impede the inſtant act.

Which, ſays Dr. Johnſon, was ſilently embraced by Theobald, Sir T. Hanmer, and Dr. Warburton. But Dr. Johnſon, with diffidence, propoſes to read:

Yes, in this preſent quality of war,
Indeed of inſtant action.

Mr. Steevens thinks *impel* might be the word; and Mr. Tollet ſuppoſes *inſtanced* might be admitted. I ſhall offer a very ſlight alteration, which may poſſibly reſtore the genuine reading:

Yes, in this preſent quality of war,
In deed of inſtant action.

By diſſolving the adverb, *indeed*, into the prepoſition *in* and the ſubſtantive *deed*, ſenſe is made of the paſſage, without any violence to the text. "It certainly (ſays Lord Bardolph) is hurtful to build upon fortuitous hopes, if by them we are tempted into action unprepared."

Act II. Hoſteſs and officers.

HOSTESS.

I am undone by his going.

If Falſtaff goes to the wars without paying me his debt, I ſhall be ruined.

FALSTAFF.

Throw the quean into the kennel.

Quean is a word ſeldom uſed now. It means, in general acceptation, a woman lewd in her perſon, and vociferous in her diſcourſe. Originally, ſays Verſtegan, it ſignified a barren old cow.

HOSTESS.

Thou art a man queller.

The word *queller* was formerly written *cweller*, and ſignified a troubler or tormentor. Anciently, ſays Verſtegan, it ſometimes meant a hangman.

FALSTAFF.

Away, you ſcallion! you rampallian! you fuſtilarian! I'll tickle your cataſtrophe!

This is certainly addreſſed to the hoſteſs. Scullion is plain enough. Rampallian, Steevens ſays, is an old rampant proſtitute; and, we may add, perhaps, a dealer in ſuch goods. Fuſtilarian is a bitter ſarcaſm, ſignifying, from the word *fuſty*, that ſhe was ſtale and muſty. The lady, in Gay's comedy of the diſtreſſed wife, calls her own and her huſband's relations *old fuſties*. As to *I'll tickle your cataſtrophe*, if we conſider the ſpeaker, and to whom it was ſpoken, the meaning may be eaſily gueſſed.

FALSTAFF.

My lord, I will not undergo this ſneap.

Mr. Pope has explained a *ſneap* to be a rebuke. But Mr. Steevens, not content with this, has (beſides referring us to Ray's Proverbs) produced no leſs than three authorities to prove the ſame thing; for, what is to *check*, but to rebuke? *Sneap* has, by loſing a letter, been changed into *ſnap*.——

HOSTESS.

I hope you will come to ſupper.

Here this fooliſh woman is cajoled by the knight to increaſe her debt by pawning her plate,—and this is very eaſily accounted for, by reſolving her behaviour into the power of cuſtom. The hoſteſs could not endure the melancholy thoughts of having her rooms unoccupied by her old gueſts, Falſtaff and his companions.

Scene II. Prince and Poins.

POINS.

I will ſteep this letter in ſack, and make him eat it.

Mr. Steevens quotes the ſtory of an apparitor who was obliged to eat a citation, wax and all, by the famous Robert Green. Modern times can produce nothing like this, except the contrivance of a noted gameſter, who being determined at all events to win a pretty large ſum of money, reſolved to deſtroy the evidence of a card againſt him; and, calling for two ſlices of bread and butter, and clapping the obnoxious witneſs between them, he fairly devoured it, and won the game.

PRINCE HENRY.

From a god to a bull! a heavy deſcenſion!

The word *heavy* ſeems to convey no appoſite meaning. I ſhould imagine Shakſpeare wrote *heavenly* deſcenſion, and the words which follow ſeem to juſtify this reading,—*It was Jove's caſe.* It was a deſcent from heaven by Jupiter himſelf. *From a prince to a'prentice, a low transformation*, ſeems to be contraſted with the former metamorphoſis.

Scene III. Northumberland, Lady Percy, &c.

LADY PERCY.

For thoſe who could ſpeak low and tardily,
Would turn their own perfections to abuſe
To ſeem like him.

This is the general practice of inferior minds, to catch at, and imitate, the defects of great ſpirits, becauſe eaſily attained, rather than emulate their noble and generous qualities. This admirable ſpeech of Lady Percy, in which ſhe endeavours to diſſuade Northumberland from joining the revolters, by putting him in mind of Hotſpur's fate, concludes with a moſt beautiful picture.

Had my ſweet Harry had but half their numbers,
To-day might I, hanging on Hotſpur's neck,
Have talk'd of Monmouth's grave!

NORTHUMBERLAND.

I will reſolve for Scotland.

Notwithſtanding the Earl of Northumberland had been pardoned by the king, ſoon after the battle of Shrewſbury, his reſtleſs mind perſiſting in acts of rebellion, he determined to join Archbiſhop Scroope, but was prevented by forces ſent againſt him, which apprehending he could not reſiſt, he fled to Scotland; whence, after ſome little ſtay, he retired to Wales with Lord Bardolph. From Wales they marched into Yorkſhire, and raiſed an army; but were oppoſed by the king's forces.

ſorces. Northumberland was killed in the battle of Bramham-more, and Lord Bardolph died of the wounds he received there.

Scene IV. Falſtaff and Doll.

FALSTAFF.

A tame cheater, he.

By a very good note of Mr. Steevens on this paſſage, in which he quotes Mihil Mumchance, the gameſters were called *cheaters*, and the dice *cheters*. I ſuppoſe cheters were falſe dice, which in more modern times are called *the doctors*.

PISTOL.

Sweet knight, I kiſs thy neif.

Neif is the Scotch word, at this day, for fiſt.

FALSTAFF.

A raſcally ſlave! to brave me!

This ſcene preſents us with a new character—— Piſtol! a coward, who talks big enough to frighten away fear. He is an excellent portrait of the ſword and buckler men, or bravoes, of Queen Beſs's days, who were ready to ſhew courage where no oppoſition would be made. Theſe were the bullies in the houſes of entertainment of our author's time. Piſtol is a hero, where ſuch as Bardolph, Nym, and, Peto, are the underlings. He ſeems to be an obvious character; and yet it muſt be owned that no actor, however well inſtructed and judicious, has gained great applauſe in the repreſentation of the burleſque and boiſterous humour of Piſtol ſince it was played by Theophilus Cibber. He aſſumed a peculiar kind of falſe ſpirit, and uncommon bluſtering, with ſuch turgid action, and long unmeaſurable ſtrides, that it was impoſſible not to laugh at ſo extravagant a figure, with ſuch loud and groteſque vociferation. He became ſo famous for his action in this part, that he acquired the name of Piſtol, at firſt as a mark rather of merit, but finally as a term of ridicule. He was drawn in that character by Hogarth, with ſeveral other comedians who revolted from the patentees of Drury-lane in 1733, and was brought on the Covent-garden ſtage. He was not ill repreſented by Aſton, a ſon of the famous Tony Aſton, in a farce called The Stage Mutineers, in 1734.* The. Cibber acted Piſtol when young, and Colley Cibber, his father, took unuſual pains to inſtruct him.

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* The firſt eight lines of the prologue to this forgotten piece have ſomething in them like humour:

Britons, attend!——Inſpir'd, the poet ſings
The fall of empires and the fate of kings!
Empires, by too much policy o'erthrown;
And kings, expell'd from kingdoms—not their own.
He ſings no fables, but domeſtic jars,
Heroic dudgeons, and theatric wars:
Wars without armies, battles without blood,
For ſeas of paſteboard, and for realms of wood.

CHAPTER XV.

Miſtake of Shakſpeare.—Death of Glendower.—Shallow and ſilence.—Mr. Steevens.—Proof that Falſtaff was originally Sir John Oldcaſtle.—Sir Dagonet.—A fool not fit to repreſent one.—Juſtice Shallow.—John of Ghent and the great Duke of Marlborough.—Falſtaff and Shallow.——Ben Jonſon the actor.—Colley Cibber's art.—His admirable acting.—Treachery not ſtigmatized.—Who firſt beheaded prelates and burned heretics.—Miracles put to flight—Falſtaff's opinion of the effects of wine.—Fiſh diet.—Falſtaff and Hippocrates.—Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Ariſtotle, and Dr. Falconer.—Duke of Clarence.—Cruſade to Jeruſalem.—King Henry's character.—Actors of King Henry and Prince of Wales.

Act III. Scene, king, &c.

KING.

Though then, Heav'n knows, I had no ſuch intent.

SHAKSPEARE forgets that, before this interview between Richard and Northumberland, Henry had laid claim to the crown, and was proclaimed king.

WARWICK.

——————— I have receiv'd
A certain inſtance that Glendower is dead.

Inſtance for *information.* Glendower was pardoned, at the requeſt of David Holbeck, Eſq; by the king; but, being driven to great ſtraits, and reduced to wander from place to place, he periſhed for mere want.*

Scene II. Shallow, Silence.

SHALLOW.

How does your fair daughter?

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* Stowe.

SILENCE.

Alas! a black ouzle.

My daughter is ſo far from being fair, as you term her, that ſhe is of a very dark complexion.

SHALLOW.

And page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk.

In a note on this paſſage, Mr. Reed brings ſome obſervations, from a poem of J. Weever, and a pamphlet called The Travelling Jew, which tend to prove that Shakſpeare altered the name of Oldcaſtle to Falſtaff. Mr. Steevens, as if the honour of Shakſpeare were mightily concerned in this matter, ſets himſelf with great vigour to oppoſe theſe proofs, and thinks it very ſtrange that, becauſe Shakſpeare borrowed a ſingle circumſtance from the Life of the real Oldcaſtle, and imparted it to the fictitious Falſtaff, it ſhould be inferred that the name of the former ſhould be a cover to the vices of the latter. But is it true that there is but one circumſtance common to both knights? The contrary can, without much difficulty, be proved. That Sir John Oldcaſtle, before the acceſſion of Henry V. to the crown, was much about his perſon, nay, one of his domeſtics, we learn from the Life of that king, written in Latin by T. Livius.—*Erant namque, per id temporis, milites duo equeſtris ordinis, Joannes Oldcaſtle, (qui ante coronationem regis ab ipſo, propter has opiniones, dimiſſus fuerat, et ab ejus famulatu penitus abjectus,) et Joannes Acton.*

That Sir John Oldcaſtle had been guilty of many and great irregularities, we have his own confeſſion, in theſe words, recorded in Bale's Chronicle of his Life. "And with that he kneeled down on the pavement, holding up his hands towards heaven, and ſaid, '*I ſhrive* me here unto thee, my eternal living*

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* Confeſs.

living God, that, in my frail youth, I offended the Lord moſt grievouſly, in pride, wrath, and gluttony, in covetouſneſs and lechery; many men have I hurt in mine anger, and done many other horrible ſins."

Oldcaſtle was extremely hateful to the clergy on many accounts: not content with cenſuring the doctrine, they preached, with unbounded freedom, he endeavoured to prove that they were become an order of men totally unneceſſary, and a burden to the ſtate. By reproaching them with their grandeur and magnificence, he plainly manifeſted that he would greatly leſſen, if not entirely deprive, them of their revenues. He ſeems to have had, at leaſt, full as much zeal as knowledge. When ſummoned before the heads of the church, he treated them with an aſperity of language which no body of men would tolerate.

He told them at his trial, '*That they never followed Chriſt ſince the venom was ſhed in the church*'. When the archbiſhop of Canterbury aſked him what he meant by that venom. He replied, '*Your poſſeſſions and lordſhips:*' he went on to ſay, '*That Chriſt was poor and forgave. The pope is rich and a cruel manſlayer. Rome is the very neſt of Antichriſt, of that neſt came all his diſciples; of whom, prelates, prieſts, and monks, are the body, and theſe ſhaven friers the tail, which cover his moſt filthy part.*'

Can we doubt that the clergy would embrace every opportunity to encourage ſuch repreſentations of Oldcaſtle's character as would tend to make him an object of ſcorn and ridicule? I am convinced that Oldcaſtle was made the jackpudding in all the common interludes of public exhibition. He was a liar, a glutton, a profane ſwearer, and a coward; in ſhort any thing that might render him odious to the common people.

That Shakſpeare found him ſuch, it is reaſonable to imagine, and that he adopted the name of

Oldcaſtle in his firſt ſketch of the ſcene of licentious gaiety between the prince of Wales and the fat knight.

When the reformation was eſtabliſhed, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the proteſtants claimed Oldcaſtle as a proto-martyr in their cauſe; conſequently, all repreſentations of him in a ludicrous light on the ſtage became offenſive to ſerious people: and hence we may conclude, that, though Shakſpeare had inadvertently been ſurpriſed into the uſe of Oldcaſtle's name, he ſoon relinquiſhed it, by giving one leſs offenſive to his favourite character.

MOULDY.

You ſhall have forty, ſir.

You ſhall have an equal ſum to what Bullcalf has offered; four Harry, ten ſhillings, or forty ſhillings.

FALSTAFF.

For you, Mouldy, ſtay at home till you are paſt ſervice.

This is the ſecond time Sir John has miſuſed the kings preſs-money *damnably*, as he terms it. Modern times will furniſh many inſtances of ſucceſsful imitators of Jack Falſtaff; of men who have, as ſhamefully and with equal impunity, robbed the king and the people of their money.

SHALLOW.

I was then Sir Dagonet in the play.

I believe Sir Arthur Addle, in the comedy of Sir Solomon Single, was taken from Sir Dagonet.

I do not entirely agree with Mr. Malone, that Shallow's acting Sir Dagonet was a proof of his folly; for he that performs the fool well is not a fool.

FALSTAFF.

He beat his own name.

John of Ghent, or Gaunt, was ſo named from Ghent, the place of his birth. But Ghent is pronounced as the French word *gans*, gloves. To this pun, I think, Falſtaff alludes, and not to Shallow's being gaunt or lean. *The truſſing him and his whole apparel into an eel-ſkin* ſeems to favour my conjecture. This ſort of quibble was applied to the great Duke of Marlborough; who, at the cloſe of the campaign in 1709, and on the eve of winter, having beſieged and taken the ſame city of Ghent, the news-writers quaintly ſaid, his Grace declared he could not at that time of the year croſs the water without *Ghent*, or *gloves*, to keep him warm.—*Vide Annals of Queen Anne.*

In this ſcene Shakſpeare exerts his power to ſupport an equal comic vein with his dialogue in the firſt part of this hiſtory. It cannot be denied that, however rich the humour is in the former play, he ſhews little or no inferiority in this. Falſtaff and Shallow form an admirable contraſt: the barrenneſs of the country-ſquire ſets off the fecundity of the knight. They are both egregious liars; and, though Falſtaff's inventions are more fruitful in matter and brighter in fancy, the lies of Shallow, though of a colder complexion, entertain from their characteriſtic formation.

That Kempe acted Shallow originally, the diligence of Mr. Malone, I think, has proved. I do not ſee any authority to ſuppoſe that the ſecond part of Henry IV. was revived, immediately after the Reſtoration, nor till about the middle or latter end of Queen Anne's reign, when Dogget perſonated Shallow.

When John Rich, Eſq. opened his theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, in 1715, Booth, Wilks, and Cibber, the managers of Drury-lane, ſolicitous to retain in their ſervice comedians of merit, paid a particular reſpect to B. Jonſon the actor, and gave him, beſides an addition to his income, ſuch parts of Dogget (who had taken his leave of them) as were of moſt conſequence and beſt adapted to his manner. Amongſt the reſt was the part of Juſtice Shallow. But Colley Cibber took ſuch a fancy to the merry, ignorant, and fooliſh, old rake, that upon Jonſon's ſudden illneſs, he made himſelf maſter of the part, and performed it ſo much to the ſatisfaction of the public, that he retained it as long as he remained upon the ſtage. Cibber, in his Apology, whether from real or affected modeſty, alledges that he was, in the moſt of his characters, no more than a cloſe imitator of all ſuch players as had formerly repreſented them. This was the caſe in his Fondlewife; in which he copied ſo exactly the tone of voice, manner, and dreſs, of Dogget, that the audience, he ſays, at firſt believed him to be that celebrated comedian.

Whether he was a copy or an original in Shallow, it is certain that no audience was ever more fixed in deep attention, at his firſt appearance, or more ſhaken with laughter in the progreſs of the ſcene, than at Colley Cibber's exhibition of this ridiculous juſtice of peace. Some years after he had left the ſtage, he acted Shallow for his ſon's benefit; I believe in 1737, when Quin was the Falſtaff, and Milward the king. Whether it was owing to the pleaſure the ſpectators felt on ſeeing their old friend return to them again, *though for that night only*, after an abſence of ſome years, I know not; but, ſurely, no actor or audience were better pleaſed with each other. His manner was ſo perfectly ſimple, his look ſo vacant, when he queſtioned his Couſin Silence about the price of ewes, and lamented, in the ſame breath, with ſilly ſurpriſe, the death of Old Double, that it will be impoſſible for any ſurviving ſpectator not to ſmile at the remembrance of it. The want of ideas occaſions Shallow to repeat almoſt every thing he ſays. Cibber's tranſition from aſking the price of bullocks, to trite, but grave, reflections on mortality, was ſo natural, and attended with ſuch an unmeaning roll of his ſmall pigs-eyes, accompanied with an important utterance of tick! tick! tick! not much louder than the beating of a watch, that I queſtion if any actor was ever ſuperior in the conception or expreſſion of ſuch ſolemn inſignificancy.

Jonſon, a year or two after Cibber had left the ſtage, and, when he was between ſeventy and eighty, undertook the part of Shallow; and though the old hound had loſt almoſt all his teeth, he was ſtill ſo ſtaunch, that he ſeized his game and held it faſt.

It is true that, however chaſte he was in his colouring and correct in his drawing, he wanted the high finiſhing and warm tints of Colley Cibber; yet his acting was ſuch as we may deſpair to ſee excelled, if equalled: for, though that excellent comedian, Mr. Yates, has often given great pleaſure in Shallow, I cannot think that he is ſo abſolutely juſt, in the delineation of the part, as Ben Jonſon. Mr. Parſons has, of late years, played Shallow with that happy mirth and glee which is ſure to captivate an audience: for who can be grave when Parſons either looks or ſpeaks?

Whether Jonſon conſidered his being deprived of Shallow, for almoſt twenty years, as a manager's trick, or diſhoneſt manœuvre of Colley Cibber, is not known; but the old man never ſpoke of him with any complacency.

Act IV. Scene, Archbiſhop of York, &c.

The interview of the inſurgents, and the Earl of Weſtmoreland and Duke of Lancaſter, with their armies in ſight, was never repreſented with any warm tokens of approbation from the auditors, who always diſmiſſed it with indifference, and, indeed,

deed, it appeared generally dull and unintereſting; but, whether this was owing to deficiency in the acting, or the frittering of the ſcene by the prompter, or any other cauſe, is not eaſy to be decided. Perhaps we may with juſtice attribute the cold behaviour of the ſpectators to the ſcene itſelf, which however, ſkilfully written, is not calculated to excite the paſſions or to raiſe applauſe.

LANCASTER.

Some guard theſe traitors to the block of death.

This maſter-piece of infamous treachery and breach of compact, as related by our poet, is taken pretty exactly from Hollingſhead and Stowe, though it is differently related by Hall, who makes the account much more honourable to the royaliſts. He ſays the apprehending the biſhop and his confederates was an action of ſurpriſe. However, all later hiſtorians copy the two firſt Chronicles, and what is very ſurpriſing, this perfidious breach of faith paſſes without cenſure of any writer from Hollingſhead to Hume. Our anthor is ſurely to blame for not marking the tranſaction with a proper ſtigma: he might have done it in forcible terms from the mouth of the archbiſhop of York or Lord Mowbray, who ſtrenuouſly oppoſed the proffered treaty.

The archbiſhop of York, ſays Hall, requeſted the executioner, when at the block, to cut off his head with five ſtrokes, in remembrance of the five wounds of Chriſt. In conſequence of this, it was reported, that, when the king ſat at dinner, he received five ſtrokes by an inviſible hand, and was inſtantly ſeized with a leproſy: but this, ſays Hall, in great wrath, was a manifeſt lie. However, the ſuperſtitious people believed the archbiſhop was a ſaint, and many miracles, like thoſe of Abbe Paris, was wrought at his grave, till Henry, by his authority,

thority, frightened away the people and the miracles at the ſame time.

Scroope was the firſt biſhop in England who ſuffered death for treaſon or any other crime; Henry was the firſt of our kings who burned heretics and beheaded prelates.

Scene III.

FALSTAFF.

A man cannot make him laugh: but that's no marvel; he drinks no wine. Thin drinks do ſo over-cool the blood, and making many fiſh-meals, that they fall into a kind of male green-ſickneſs; and, when they marry, they get wenches.

What Shakſpeare ſays ludicrouſly of thin potations, or water-drinking, is confirmed by no leſs authority than that of Hippocrates himſelf, in his Treatiſe on Diet, lib. 1. ſect. 20. It has likewiſe been proved, that, in the Eaſt-Indies, where they drink no wine, the number of women exceeds that of the men conſiderably.

As to fiſh diet, the common opinion is againſt Falſtaff; for it is by many ſuppoſed to be of a prolific nature. This was hinted by Arbuthnot in his Treatiſe on Diet, and ſuggeſted by Monteſquieu in his Spirit of Laws. Haller and Dr. Reynold Foſter are of a different opinion. However, as far as ſilence on the ſubject may be allowed to ſpeak for the jolly knight's opinion, the ancient hiſtorians are on his ſide: for neither Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, nor Arrian,* (all of whom have deſcribed ſeveral nations living on fiſh-diet,) have mentioned this quality belonging to it, or obſerved that ſuch countries were more than commonly populous There is another quality charged upon fiſh, which is ſtill more remarkable. Whether the authority of Diodorus Siculus be ſo weighty as to gain any credit, I muſt leave to the reader: but he declares that the conſtant eaters of fiſh are endued with a remarkable apathy, or inſenſibility, not only to the ſentiments of the mind, but alſo to ſome of the natural appetites.

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* Falconer on ſolid food.

IDEM.

Skill in the weapon is nothing without ſack. A good ſherris ſack hath a twofold operation in it; it aſcends me into the brain, and dries me all the fooliſh and dull vapours.

With Falſtaff, wine is the promoter of courage and every good quality of the mind.

Athenæus, ſays Dr. Falconer, makes an obſervation ſimilar to this. It is true; and I could quote many Greek verſes to prove it: but the doctor knows there are ſo many precepts from various poets, and other writers, quoted by the ſame author, againſt the immoderate uſe of wine, that Falſtaff's followers would loſe more than they got by the authority of Athenæus. After this long note on fiſh and wine, I hope the reader will pardon a quotation from Ariſtotle's Problems; in which that philoſopher gives an accurate deſcription of the progreſs of wine, and the effects of its immoderate uſe.

'When a ſober, moderate, and ſilent man drinks wine in a quantity more liberal than ordinary, it has the effect of cheriſhing and rouſing his ſpirits and genius, and rendering him more communicative: if taken ſtill more freely, he becomes talkative, eloquent, and confident of his abilities: if taken in ſtill larger quantities, it renders him bold and daring, and deſirous to exert himſelf in action: if he perſiſt in a more plentiful doſe, it makes him petulant and contumelious. The next ſtep renders him mad and outrageous. Should he proceed ſtill farther, he becomes ſtupid and ſenſeleſs.' Ariſtot. Probl. ſect. 30.

Scene IV. King, Warwick, Clarence, Gloſter.

KING.

Nothing but well to thee, Thomas of Clarence.

The king's recommending to the Duke of Clarence a particular obſervance of his brother the Prince of Wales, and aſſuring him of the prince's affection for him, is grounded upon a converſation between the king and the prince, recorded by Stowe; in which the former puts the latter on his guard againſt the machinations of Clarence. The uſe which Shakſpeare makes of this hiſtorical incident every reader will ſee and approve.

IDEM.

Towards fronting peril and oppos'd decay.

That is, to deſperate adventures and aſſured deſtruction.

CLARENCE.

The river hath thrice flow'd; no ebb between!

The ſhort reign of this king was ſignalized by many ſad diſaſters. Beſides this extraordinary flow of the flood, which Mr. Steevens authenticates, a moſt deſtructive plague depopulated the whole kingdom. In London no leſs than thirty thouſand were deſtroyed by it; and the king, endeavouring to retire by water to Eſſex, very narrowly eſcaped being taken by ſome armed veſſels from France.

The much-admired interview, between the King and the Prince of Wales, owes its beauty principally to ſituation and character. The taking away the crown by the prince produces a moſt pathetic dialogue; ſuch perhaps as no writer, except Shakſpeare, could draw from ſo ſlender an incident.

Where the heart ſpeaks, no ornament of words is neceſſary: the more plain and ſimple the diction, the more affecting it will be. Such is the ſcene, though ſtill more intereſting, between Queen Katharine and Griffith, in the fourth act of Henry VIII. where that princeſs takes leave of the world, with a noble grandeur of mind, in expreſſions the moſt feeling, and at the ſame time the moſt familiar and unadorned.

The great expiation of ſin, in the days of Henry, was eſteemed to be a cruſade to the Holy Land; and, though I once imagined he was not ſincere in his intention of undertaking the expedition, yet I know not whether motives religious and political might not have co-operated to urge him to it. He certainly made great preparations for it, and it is certain that his ſon, Henry V. as a proof of his piety, on his death-bed declared, that if he had recovered from his illneſs, it was his firm reſolution to reſcue, if poſſible, the Holy Land from the infidels. This paſſion of delivering the Holy Sepulchre was ſo predominant for a long time, that the Counteſs of Richmond, mother of Henry VII. declared, if the Chriſtian princes would undertake a cruſade, ſhe would herſelf turn laundreſs and waſh their linen for them.

If it were poſſible that any thing could reconcile us to an uſurper and the murderer of his ſovereign, it muſt be the deep remorſe and the ſincere compunction which the offender feels for crimes ſo atrocious. Had Henry been the next heir to the crown, his wickedneſs would not have been leſs; but the people would not have ſuffered from inſurrections in favour of Roger Mortimer, the rightful ſucceſſor by birth. This circumſtance rendered his whole reign one continued ſcene of tumult, battle, and bloodſhed; and involved his poſterity and the kingdom in the longeſt and moſt ſanguinary war that ever afflicted a nation. However he may have been cried up by the clergy for his piety in perſecuting the followers of Wickliff, and being the firſt king of England who burned heretics, it is well known that he and his father John of Gaunt, (who were the great patrons of Wickliff,) when they underſtood that the clergy poſſeſſed almoſt half the revenues of the kingdom, declared that they would clip their wings; or words to that purpoſe. But the king ſtood in need of the clergy as much as they did of him. Henry's conſtant jealouſy and fear of loſing the crown may be forgiven; for that was a juſt part of his puniſhment for ſeiſing it: but his cruelty, in ſhedding torrents of blood to maintain the crown, can only be juſtified by the tyrant's law, neceſſity; a neceſſity which he had impoſed on himſelf.

Almoſt all the actors, who have for more than theſe laſt fifty years repreſented this pathetic ſcene of the king and his ſon, have been fortunate in engaging the attention and raiſing the affections of their auditors. Booth, who played the king, and Wilkes, who acted the prince, were highly accompliſhed, and underſtood dignity and grace of action and deportment, with all the tender paſſions of the heart, in a ſuperior degree. The elder Mills, in the king, and his ſon, an imitator of Wilks's manner, in the prince, followed almoſt immediately theſe conſummate actors; and though they were by no means equal to them, were above mediocrity, eſpecially the father in Henry, which happened to be the laſt part this worthy man appeared in. He was taken ill a few days after he had acted it, and died, I believe, in November, 1736. His name was announced in the bills for Macbeth, but Quin was obliged to ſupply his place. I ſaw him hurrying to the playhouſe between five and ſix in the evening. Milward, the ſucceſſor of Mills in Henry, was, in pathos, greatly his ſuperior. His countenance was finely expreſſive of grief, and the plaintive tones of his voice were admirably adapted to the languor of a dying perſon, and to the ſpeech of an offended yet affectionate parent. Garrick's figure did not aſſiſt him in the perſonating of this character, but the forcible expreſſion of his countenance and his energy of utterance made ample amends for defect of perſon. To deſcribe the anguiſh, mixed with terror, which he ſeemed to feel when he caſt up his eyes to heaven, and pronounced theſe words,

> How I came by the crown, O God, forgive me!

would call for the pencil of a Raphael or a Reynolds.

Though Garrick, from a mean jealouſy, a paſſion which conſtantly preyed on his mind, denied to Powell the merit of underſtanding the pathos of this celebrated ſcene, the audience thought far otherwiſe, and, by their tears and applauſe, juſtified the action of that very pleaſing tragedian.

In the laſt lingering ſtage of life, when worn by complicated diſtemper, and tormented with afflicting pains of the gout, the ſick and emaciated Barry undertook to repreſent the dying ſcenes of Henry. In perſon, if we conſult hiſtory, he was better adapted to the part than any of his predeceſſors; for almoſt all the princes of the Plantagenet line were remarkable for procerity: but that was but a trifling requiſite in this great actor. The fatherly reproofs and earneſt admonitions, from the conſequence imparted by Barry's pleaſing manner, as well as noble figure, acquired authority and importance. His feelings were, perhaps, heightened by the anxiety of his mind in the declining ſtate of his health, and the frequent pains of his cruel diſtemper. From his ſetting ſun, which emitted a warm though glimering ray, ſpectators might form a judgment what Barry had been in his meridian glory.

CHAPTER XVI.

Retroſpect on Lowin, and ſeveral other comedians, who lived during the civil war.

BEFORE I take my leave of Henry IV. I cannot forbear reflecting, with ſome concern, upon the fate of honeſt Jack Falſtaff; I mean John Lowin, the original actor of this inimitable character; and his conſtant friend and fellow-labourer, Joſeph Taylor, the firſt actor of Hamlet.

When the civil wars ſhut the doors of the theatres, many of the comedians, who had youth, ſpirit, and vigour of body, took up arms in the defence of their royal maſter. When they could no longer ſerve him by the profeſſion of acting, they boldly vindicated his cauſe in the field. Thoſe, who were too far advanced in age to give martial proofs of their attachment to royalty, were reduced to the alternative of ſtarving or engaging in ſome employment to ſupport their wants. Lowin and Taylor were, in the fatal æra of our civil diſſenſions, got beyond their grand climacteric: for Taylor had acted Hamlet almoſt forty-five years before that time, and Lowin had, for at leaſt forty-two years, delighted the public in Falſtaff.

The fanatical zeal of the Nonconformiſts could bear no exhibitions or ſhows but their own: all ſtage-plays theſe religioniſts looked upon as profane; and devoted the actors, whom they denominated the children of Satan, to perdition. That tedious writer, William Prynne, in his Hiſtriomaſtix, had, with as much folly as brutality, involved the king and queen in the guilt of encouraging, by their preſence, the Satanical diverſions of the theatre. To read and amuſe himſelf with the writings of Shakſpeare, the great Milton moſt ſhamefully charged upon Charles as a crime: though Milton himſelf was a profeſſed admirer of our great bard. Such is the malignant ſpirit of party! and ſo little able are the nobleſt minds to reſiſt its influence!

During the firſt years of the unnatural conteſt between the king and parliament, the players were not unwelcome gueſts to thoſe towns and cities which eſpouſed the royal cauſe: but, in London, where bigotry and oppoſition to the king were triumphant, they experienced nothing but perſecution. A few of the nobility, indeed, who loved the amuſements of the ſtage, encouraged the players to act in their houſes privately: but the watchful eye of furious zealots prevented all public exhibitions; except, as the author of Hiſtoria Hiſtrionica aſſerts, now and then ſuch as were given with great caution and privacy. Some time before the beheading of the unhappy Charles, a company of comedians was formed out of the wreck of ſeveral, who played at the Cockpit three or four times: but while they were acting Fletcher's Bloody Brother, the ſoldiers, ruſhing in, put an end to the play, and carried the actors to Hatton-houſe, at that time a ſort of priſon for royal delinquents; where they were confined two or three days, and, after being ſtripped of their ſtage-apparel, were diſcharged. In this tragedy, Lowin acted Aubrey, and Taylor Rollo.

The governing powers, however they might exert themſelves to ſuppreſs ſtage-players by violence, did not, by any formal act of ſtate, prohibit their repreſentation till October, 1647, and the February following; when the long parliament iſſued two ordinances, by which all ſtage-plays and interludes were abſolutely forbidden, under very ſevere penalties.

Much about this time, as far as I can collect from the little that has been handed down to us of theſe eminent men, Lowin kept the Three Pigeons at Brentford, where he was attended by Joſeph Taylor; but, whether as friend, aſſiſtant, or partner, cannot be determined. Here they lingered out an uncomfortable exiſtence, with ſcarce any other means of ſupport than thoſe which they obtained from the friends of royalty and the old lovers of the drama, who now and then paid them a viſit, and left them marks of their bounty. Upon theſe occaſions Lowin and Taylor gave their viſitors a taſte of their quality. The firſt rouſed up the ſpirit and humour of Falſtaff. Again the fat old rogue ſwore that he knew the prince and Poins as well as he that made them. Hamlet, too, raiſed the viſionary terrors of the Ghoſt, and filled his ſelect auditors with terror and amazement! To entertain their gueſts; we muſt ſuppoſe they aſſumed various perſonages, and alternately excited merriment and grief. How often were theſe honeſt fellows ſurpriſed into a belief of the good news that the king and parliament had come to a treaty! that peace would be reſtored, and the king return to his capital in triumph! How would their countenances then be lighted up with joy, the glaſs cheerfully circulate, and the meeting be diſmiſſed with *The king ſhall enjoy his own again!*

Their honeſt friend and aſſociate, Goff, the actor of womens parts at Black-friers and the Globe, was the uſual jackall to ſummon the ſcattered comedians together, that they might exhibit at Holland-Houſe, or ſome nobleman's ſeat, within a few miles of the capital.* The want of fine clothes, and the proper ornaments of a theatre, was excuſed by their noble employers; for the perſeverance of their furious perſecutors, and the violence and rapacity of the ſoldiers, had rendered it hazardous to wear any coſtly garments. Painted cloth ſerved as a good ſubſtitute to rich habits and royal trains.

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* Hiſtoria Hiſtrionica.

In theſe diſtracted times what became of thoſe comedians who had repreſented queens, princeſſes, and other females, in Shakſpeare's, Ben Jonſon's, Beaumont and Fletcher's, and Maſſinger's, plays, at this diſtance of time cannot be learned; for no hiſtorical trace of them is to be found. The two moſt celebrated of theſe performers, were John Thomſon and John Hunnieman. The laſt was the author of a play, with the name of which I ſhould be glad to enriſh the dramatic catalogue, but I cannot learn whether it was a tragedy, a comedy, or a mixture of both. From a copy of verſes to the author, by Sir Aſton Cockaine, we are informed that this dramatic piece was much approved by the public: as Sir Aſton's epiſtle contains the only information of Hunnieman's authorſhip, I ſhall tranſcribe it as a theatrical curioſity:

To Mr. John Hunnieman.

On, hopeful youth, and let thy happy ſtrain
Redeem the glory of the ſtage again;
Leſſen the loſs of Shakſpeare's death, by thy
Succeſsful pen and fortunate phantaſy.
He did not only write but act, and ſo
Thou doſt not only act, but writeſt too.
Between you there no difference appears,
But what may be made up with equal years.
This is my ſuffrage, and I ſcorn my pen
Should crown the heads of undeſerving men.

Great muſt have been the loſs of this play to the public, if Hunnieman was a rival of Shakſpeare, as is ſuggeſted by Sir Aſton.

Of all the players, mentioned in any narrative relative to the Engliſh ſtage, Eylæard Swanſton, the ſucceſſor of Burbage in the character of Othello, was the only one who profeſſed himſelf a Preſbyterian, and an avowed friend of the parliament, in oppoſition to the royal cauſe. I will not go ſo far as Charles II. who told a nobleman that Preſbyterianiſm *was a religion not fit for a gentleman*; but I much doubt whether Swanſton's zeal did not abridge his charity. ——— A convert is often a narrow-minded bigot, and poor Lowin, Taylor, and the reſt of his old friends, could not expect, from one of Calamy's congregation, any kind retroſpect of friendſhip.*

But the only man, who triumphed over the wild fanaticiſm and cruel hypocriſy of the times, was that excellent comedian Robert Cox, whoſe name I do not ſee in any of the old liſts of actors.

When all the theatres were ſilenced, Cox employed himſelf in compoſing ſmall interludes, called *drolls*, like ſuch as were formerly acted at Bartholomew and Southwark-fairs. The moſt ſerious of theſe pieces, ſuch as Actæon and Diana, and Oenone, had a daſh of the comic in them, though, for the moſt part, they were farces of one act, with ſinging and dancing; as *Hobbinol*, *Singing Simpſon*, and *Simpleton the Smith*.† By the connivance of the ſtate Cerberus's, to whom this adroit fellow ſlily gave an opiate or ſop of *aurum palpabile*, he contrived to get his pieces acted to full houſes at the Red Bull Theatre, under the colour of rope-dancing. Cox acted the principal parts himſelf, and with ſuch life, ſpirit, and nature, that he reſtored to the people the long-forgotten cuſtom of widening their jaws into riſibility; for, to laugh, in thoſe days of hypocriſy, was a mortal ſin. When he played young Simpleton the Smith at a country fair, he ſo delighted the noted maſter of a forge, in thoſe parts, that he very gravely offered to take him for his journeymen, and to allow him twelvepence per week more than the reſt: "I would accept your proffer with all my heart, (ſaid Cox,) *but you ſee I have a good ſhop of my own.*"

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* The author of Hiſtoria Hiſtrionica ſays, Swanſton took up the trade of a Jeweller. I ſhould imagine that he had been originally bred one, and left jewelling for the ſtage.

† Langbaine.

This comedian travelled all over the kingdom with his company, which conſiſted, I think of himſelf, a man, and a boy. The univerſities themſelves opened their arms to entertain this maſter of merriment. When he went to Stourbridge Fair, Cox did not forget to renew his acquaintance with the heads of houſes. At Oxford he ſo far got into the good graces of a poetical butler, that he was pleaſed to oblige him with a prologue, that he might appear in form, as he had formerly ſeen the members of a college, when they acted a play at Chriſtmas.*

By purſuing this method of itinerant exhibition, and by never ſtaying long at a place, this comedian acquired conſiderable ſums of money, and I have not the leaſt doubt that he ſhared a good part of his profits with his old ſuperannuated friends at Brentford. The prayers are, of all people, the /l moſt alive to the feelings of humanity, and the readieſt to relieve one another's wants. Let us conſider Cox as the good Samaritan, who poured balm into the wounds of poor Lowin and Taylor, and ſometimes cheered their hearts in the midſt of their diſtreſſes. Theſe, indeed, were greatly increaſed after the beheading of the king and the extirpation of monarchy. The players, however, transferred their allegiance to the ſon of their unhappy ſovereign, and amongſt their friends and wellwiſhers, drank a health, we may reaſonably believe, *to their king over the water.* A toaſt that might be given *at that time* with propriety as well as loyalty.

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* Langbaine.

In 1647, Shirley publiſhed the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, I believe, with a view chiefly to relieve the wants of the ſurviving actors, who had diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the principal characters of theſe writers. The names of Joſeph Taylor, John Lowin, Theophilus Bird, Robert Benfield, Stephen Hammerton,* Thomas Pollard,† and Richard Robinſon, are ſubſcribed to a dedication preſented to the Earl of Pembroke, the patron of dramatic poetry.

In 1652, Taylor and Lowin, being arrived to a very great age, and in very indigent circumſtances, publiſhed Fletcher's comedy of the Wild-gooſe Chaſe for their mutual advantages: it was uſhered into the world with an advertiſement, in which they modeſtly intimated their wants, and called upon the benevolence of all who had a taſte for the drama.

I ſhould not forget that Joſeph Taylor was the friend of Philip Maſſinger; that he inſcribed to him a copy of verſes on the ſucceſs of his Roman Actor, in which tragedy Taylor performed the principal part.

My very learned and kind friend, the Reverend Mr. Bowle, of Idmiſton, has informed me that he has read a copy of verſes of Shakerly Marmion, author of the Antiquary and ſeveral other dramatic pieces, to Joſeph Taylor, upon his preſentment of The Faithful Shepherdeſs, in which he ſtyles him his worthy friend.

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* This player was firſt a famous repreſenter of womens characters, and afterwards, as much celebrated for a graceful actor of mens parts.

† Pollard was more fortunate than the reſt of his aſſociates; having a fortune of his own, he retired into the country, and lived with his relations.

The exact time, when Taylor and Lowin died, cannot be traced; but, it is certain, they paid the debt to nature ſome few years before the Reſtoration. Lowin died at Brentford, and Taylor at Richmond.

King Henry VIII.

CHAPTER XVII.

Reaſons why this play was written in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.—King James's diſlike to the family of Tudor accounted for.—His love of poetry and regard for Shakſpeare.—The author's difficulty in drawing a portrait of Henry VIII. — *Merit of the play.—The prologue and its author.—Interview of two kings in the vale of Arde.—Buckingham and Wolſey.—Paſſages explained.—Generoſity of the French.—Word* royal *explained.—And the word* fierce.—*Character of the Emperor Charles* V. *—Wolſey's immenſe revenues.—Cibber's Wolſey. —Moſſop and Digges.—The author's admirable portraitures of Engliſh princes.—Betterton's excellent acting of Henry* VIII.—*The Wolſey of Harris. —His various merit in comedy and tragedy.—Booth's Harry* VIII.—*Quin, Harper, Price, and Nokes.*

MR. Malone has laboured ſtrenuouſly, and, I think, ſucceſsfully, to prove that the hiſtorical play of Henry VIII. muſt have been acted during the life-time of Queen Elizabeth. Several paſſages of the play may be produced, which, from their internal evidence, would farther convince us that the author could not have projected ſuch a piece in the reign of James I.

But there is yet a ſtronger reaſon for inſiſting upon this argument than what has been hitherto produced: our author could not be unacquainted with the extreme averſion which James had entertained, long before he mounted the throne of England,

land, to his predeceſſor; an averſion that could not be extinguiſhed by her deceaſe.

Upon his acceſſion to the crown, nobody durſt appear before him in a mourning habit for that princeſs. Sully, the French ambaſſador, who had been particularly enjoined by his maſter Henry IV. to pay that decent reſpect which was due to the memory of his friend and ally, was obliged to throw aſide the mourning dreſſes he had purchaſed for himſelf and his retinue, upon being informed that, if he perſiſted in his deſign, he would not eaſily gain an audience of the king. James's averſion to the family of his predeceſſor was univerſally known; and, though he pretended to be angry with Sir Walter Raleigh for the ſevere character of Henry VIII. which he had given in the preface to his Hiſtory of the World, yet it was well known that his own opinion coincided with that of the hiſtorian.

The king's diſlike to the Tudor family was not founded on mere caprice. Henry VIII. in his laſt will, had, as far as was in his power, by not mentioning them, excluded, from the throne of England, the whole Scottiſh race; for he preferred the deſcendants from his younger ſiſter, of the houſe of Brandon, to the offspring of Margaret, the elder ſiſter, who was married to James IV. of Scotland. Queen Elizabeth, beſides the putting his mother, under the form of law, to an ignominious death, had treated James himſelf with inſufferably aſſumed haughtineſs and ſuperiority. She deferred the nomination of his ſucceſſion to the throne of England to the laſt moments of her life.

The king, who was a lover of the muſes, and had ſacrificed to them himſelf in his early days, conferred marks of royal favour upon Shakſpeare, almoſt as ſoon as he took poſſeſſion of his new dominions;

minions; and the poet was too good a courtier to write a play upon a ſubject which was to include a laboured panegyrick on the king's hated predeceſſor and her family.

It was no eaſy taſk for an author to compoſe a dramatic piece which ſhould comprehend ſeveral tranſactions of a monarch recently dead, who had rendered himſelf ſo odious to his ſubjects. To bring upon the ſtage, before the reigning queen, his daughter, a character ſo doubtful, at leaſt, as her royal father; to preſent a ſtrong reſemblance of many of his moſt ſtriking features, without alarming his ſovereign, or diſguſting the ſpectators; was an undertaking worthy the genius of Shakſpeare; and in which, notwithſtanding the apparent difficulty, he has admirably ſucceeded.

Although this play, on a ſuperficial view, contains nothing but a tiſſue of pomp and ceremony, made out of maſques and trials, a coronation and a chriſtening, it abounds in ſtriking events, which embrace the fates of important characters,—with paſſions which excite our terror and commiſeration, and with profound morality, which tends to moderate, to humble, and to rectify, the mind.

The prologue, like moſt compoſitions of that ſort in our author's days, is little more than good ſenſe put into meaſured proſe. Our laſt editors, and their aſſiſtants, ſuſpect, with reaſon, that it was not entirely the work of Shakſpeare. Ben Jonſon, it is ſuppoſed, wrote the greateſt part of it, if not the whole. Every body will perceive that the beginning bears no reſemblance to that reſerve and modeſty with which our poet ever addreſſed an audience.

'I come no more to make you laugh: things now,
That bear a weighty and a ſerious brow,

Sad, high, and working, full of ſtate and ſhow,
Such *noble* ſcenes as draw the eye to flow.
We now preſent.———

Great part of the prologue is compoſed of ſevere ſatire on plays which abound with the noiſe of targets, of drums and trumpets, and the exhibition of fools, whoſe coats are *guarded with yellow*; and, as our author comes properly within this cenſure, Jonſon, in all probability, maliciouſly ſtole an opportunity to throw in his envious and ſpiteful invective before the repreſentation of his rival's play.

In all probability Henry VIII. was revived ſoon after the coronation of James and his Queen, Anne of Denmark. Jonſon, by his connection with the court, might occaſionally be uſeful towards conducting the pageantry of the ſcenes. Whether Jonſon's Sejanus was acted before Henry VIII. was revived, is not now to be known; but, much about that time, a peace ſeems to have been patched up between Jonſon and the players, and, moſt likely, by the mediation of our gentle bard; for Shakſpeare not only acted a character in Sejanus, but wrote part of the tragedy as it was originally performed.

Act I. Scene I.

Dukes of Norfolk and Buckingham.

BUCKINGHAM.

Thoſe ſons of glory, thoſe two lights of men,
Met in the vale of Arde!

Since this interview of Henry of England and Francis king of France, in the vale of Arde, nothing has taken place between any European monarchs that can be compared to it in magnificent ſhow and performance of military exerciſe: the nobility of both countries were ſo oſtentatiouſly prodigal, and ſo emulous in ſplendor and dreſs, that the place where the two kings met was called *the field of the cloth of gold.* In conſequence of this rivalſhip in grandeur, they involved themſelves in ſuch expence, that the penury of their whole lives afterwards could not repair the profuſion of a few days.

IDEM.

——— All the time
I was in my chamber a priſoner.

The poet has not put in the mouth of Buckingham the true reaſon of his abſence from this interview at Arde ——The duke was very rich and loved œconomy,—a quality by no means pleaſing to an arbitrary court, by which independence is ever viewed with ſuſpicious eyes. He, finding the preparations for this ſolemnity amount to immenſe ſums, threw out expreſſions of diſpleaſure againſt Cardinal Wolſey, whom he accuſed as the contriver of the parade. Lord Herbert, Hollingſhead, and Polydore Virgil, agree in this circumſtance, and thence we may date Wolſey's animoſity to the duke.

NORFOLK.

Pomp, till this time, was ſingle, but now marry'd
To one above itſelf.

That is, pomp was now overmatched. The meeting of two ſuch mighty monarchs, and their queens, with a retinue of men and women, the moſt illuſtrious for birth, rank, courage, beauty, and every accompliſhment, leſſened and diſgraced all pomps and ceremonies preceding.

The poet, in the purſuit of a noble thought, ſometimes overſtrains himſelf, and miſſes the mark he aims at. The whole deſcription of this celebrated meeting is rich in matter, though harſh in expreſſion. It is laboured with art, but often rugged, and ſometimes bordering on obſcurity.

IDEM.

——— Their very labour
Was to them a painting.

That is, it brought colour into their cheeks.

IDEM.

——— Still him in eye,
Still him in praiſe.

Henry and Francis were univerſally ſaid to be the handſomeſt men of the age in which they lived, and moſt expert in military exerciſes. In the ſeveral engagements at tilts and tournaments, whether owing to their ſuperior ſkill and bravery, or the addreſs and politeneſs of their rivals, they bore away the palm from all competitors. An inſtance or two of Engliſh courage and French generoſity, which happened during this memorable tranſaction, and can only be known by recurring to Chronicles or larger hiſtories, may not, perhaps, be unwelcome to the reader.

It muſt be confeſſed that the King of France, in the generoſity and frankneſs of his temper, greatly excelled his oſtentatious rival. Francis felt himſelf hurt at the various and unneceſſary precautions obſerved when he viſited Henry; the number of the guards, on both ſides, was carefully reckoned; every ſtep was meaſured with the utmoſt ſcrupuloſity. Tired out with theſe diſguſting forms and ceremonies, Francis, one day, took with him two gentlemen and a page, and rode directly to Henry's quarter at Guiſnes. The guards manifeſting ſurpriſe on ſeeing the monarch approach them, he called aloud to them, "You are my priſoners! Carry me to your maſter." Henry was aſtoniſhed at the preſence of his brother-king, and quite overcome with this unexpected example of generous confidence, took him in his arms, and told him he had played him a moſt agreeable trick, and that he now ſurrendered himſelf his priſoner from that moment.

The Earl of Somerſet gave an inſtance of intrepidity and quickneſs of apprehenſion, which deſerves to be remembered. It was one preliminary article of the interview, That the French and Engliſh ſhould not, in number, exceed each other. It was found, on examination, that the French greatly out-numbered the Engliſh. Somerſet, inſtead of taking umbrage at this apparent breach of articles, cried out aloud, "Let them paſs! it is plain they have not the ſpirit to truſt us, though we have the courage to truſt ourſelves with them."

NORFOLK.

——— All was *royal*
To the diſpoſing of it.

By the word *royal*, in Shakſpeare, we are to underſtand ſomething ſupremely excellent; as in Macbeth, Act II.

———Our fears, in Banquo,
Stick deep, and in his *royalty* of nature
Reigns that which would be fear'd.

The word ϐασιλευτερον, in Homer, has the ſame import; and is ſo applied by Theoclemenes the fugitive, in his exclamation to Telemachus, on obſerving an omen, which he interprets in his favour:

Υμετερȣ δ' ουκ εστι γενευς ϐασιλευτερον αλλο
Εν δημω Ιθακης. ODYSS. LIB. XVII.

In Wolſey's ſpeech to Sir William Kingſton, juſt before he expired, it is to be obſerved that the word *royal* ſtands for confirmed obſtinacy of temper.

"He was a prince, ſaid the dying cardinal, of a moſt *royal* carriage, and hath a princely heart; and, rather than he will miſs for any part of his will, he will endanger half the kingdom."

BUCKINGHAM.

——— What had he to do
In theſe fierce vanities? ———

Mr. Steevens is of opinion that *fierce* is uſed here as the French word *fier*. Dr. Johnſon goes farther, and ſuppoſes it might poſſibly mean the mimical ferocity of the combatants; and this is nearer the author's intention, I believe: for theſe mock fights often produced very terrible conſequences; many combatants, in the vale of Arde, were unhorſed; Henry II. ſon of Francis, was killed, by the ſplinter of a ſpear, in a tournament. So many lives were occaſionally loſt at theſe trials of perſonal proweſs, that, utterly to diſcourage and put an end to them, the popes iſſued canons and decrees againſt them, as practices unlawful and unchriſtian; and, when nothing elſe could prevail, finally to extirpate them, they denied chriſtian burial to thoſe who died in ſuch encounters.

In Timon of Athens, *fierce* means, I think, *exceſſive*, *extreme*, or *terrible*. The ſteward, ſpeaking of Timon's fall from the higheſt proſperity to the loweſt ſtate of poverty, ſays,

O the *fierce* wretchedneſs which glory brings!

BUCKINGHAM.

——— Why the devil,
Upon the French going out ———

That is, upon the French conſenting to ſettle the terms of accommodation, to meet the Engliſh in the vale of Arde, by an interview with the two kings.

NORFOLK.

France hath flaw'd the league.

To have a juſt knowledge of Henry's and his miniſter's characters, it is neceſſary to throw in ſome light from hiſtory:

Though the Duke of Norfolk charges the French with breaking the ſolemn compact entered into between the two kings, at their interview, from which they parted with the moſt ſolemn proteſtations of friendſhip, the diſſolving of the treaty cannot be aſcribed to Francis. Charles V. Emperor of Germany, the moſt ſubtle, intereſted, and diſingenuous, prince of his time, was alarmed at the late interview, and conſequent confederacy, of two ſuch potent monarchs. When Henry, before he returned to his dominions, paid a viſit to him at Gravelines, the politic Charles, who ſaw through the capricious temper of his viſitor, ſoon found means to efface that friendſhip to which the ſincere and noble temper of the French king had given birth. But, that which was more eſſential to his intereſt, he gained over Wolſey to his ſide, by promiſing to aſſiſt him in acquiring the papacy, and by putting him in poſſeſſion of the revenues of two biſhoprics in Caſtile. The exorbitant incomes which the cardinal enjoyed were not greatly inferior to the revenues of the king himſelf. The Duke of Buckingham hints at the cardinal's penſion from the emperor in a following part of the ſcene:

——I'm ſure the emperor
Paid 'ere he promis'd.

Enter the cardinal with the purſe borne before him.

The cardinal, in his paſſage, fixeth his eye on Buckingham, and Buckingham on him, both full of diſdain.

The inſtruction which Shakſpeare, in this quotation, has given the actors, is not ſo generally obſerved as it ought. The aſpect of Wolſey, to Buckingham, ſhould at once be ſteady and deliberate, ſcornful and reproaching. Buckingham's look, in return, ſhould be fierce, indignant, and impatient. The cardinal, in paſſing by the duke, ſhould ſtill keep his eye fixed upon him, as if demanding ſome ſalutation or mark of reſpect; but, on the duke's perſiſting ſilence, he turns to his ſecretaries, and enquires of them concerning the examination of the duke's ſurveyor, in a tone not quite loud enough to be heard by the duke.

Colley Cibber has been much praiſed for his aſſuming port, pride, and dignity, in Wolſey; but his manner was not correſpondent to the grandeur of the character. The man who was familiar in the councils and deſigns of mighty monarchs, muſt have acquired an eaſy dignity in action and deportment, and ſuch as Colley Cibber never underſtood or practiſed. If ſpeaking with feeling and energy were all the requiſites in the cardinal, Moſſop would have excelled greatly; but in ſpite of the robe, which was of ſome advantage to him, his action, his ſtep, and whole conduct of his perſon, were extremely awkward, and unſuitable to the accompliſhed ſtateſman, the companion of princes. Mr Digges, if he had not ſometimes been extravagant in geſture and quaint in elocution, would have been nearer the reſemblance of the great miniſter than any actor I have ſeen repreſent it.

Scene II. Council Chamber.

Enter King Henry leaning upon Wolſey.

Shakſpeare is eminent in the drawing of his moſt diſtinguiſhed hiſtorical characters: here, more particularly, genius guides his pencil. If we compare his ſeveral portraits of our Engliſh kings with their actions, as recorded in hiſtory, we ſhall perceive a ſtriking and faithful reſemblance. They are as powerfully diſcriminated by their peculiar paſſions, virtues, follies and faculties, as the heroes of the greateſt poet of the ancients. The gloomy turbulence of John; the raſhneſs and effeminacy of Richard II. the jealous anxiety for the crown in Henry IV. the generous and warlike ſpirit of Henry V. the piety and imbecility of Henry VI. the ſubtlety, perfidy, cruelty, and courage, of Richard III. and, laſtly, the ſtrutting grandeur, imperious ſpirit, and undiſguiſed, though boiſterous temper of Henry VIII.—theſe characters are ſo juſtly and ſkilfully ſeparated from each other, by the author, that no name is wanted to diſtinguiſh them from each other.

Betterton was taught the part of Harry VIII. by Sir William Davenant, from his remembrance of the performance of the admired and accompliſhed Lowin. Old Downs gives it as his opinion, that nobody can ever approach to the great excellence which Betterton diſplayed in acting the king. 'Wolſey (ſays the ſame ſtage-hiſtorian) was ſupported with great pride, port, and mein, by *Harris*, an actor, of whom we ſcarce know any thing, except that he played a variety of characters in tragedy and comedy, and ſuppoſe, from that circumſtance, he muſt have enjoyed very comprehenſive abilities for the ſtage.' I find his name, in Downs, to Romeo, and to Sir Andrew Aguecheek in Twelfth

Night, which are parts as diſtant, in dramatic features, as Hamlet and the Grave-digger. Harris was the actor of theſe and many other parts of equal diſſimilarity. Cibber, I ſuppoſe, had not ſeen him, for his name is not in his Apology. I imagine he left the ſtage much about the time the companies of Drury-lane and Dorſet-gardens were, by the king's command, united. Harris's name is not to be found in the dramatis perſonæ of any play ſince that period. He had formerly been joint-director of the duke's company with Lady Davenant and Betterton, and might poſſibly be offended that, in the treaty between Betterton, in conjunction with Davenant's ſucceſſors, and Hart and Kynaſton, of the king's theatre, he was left out.*

His merit, in ſeveral characters beſides Wolſey, is noticed by Downs; particularly in Sir Poſitive Atall in the Impertinents of Shadwell, taken from Moliere's Les Facheux, and the part of the maſter, in The Man's the Maſter, by Davenant. His talents were not confined to acting alone; ſinging was another of his qualifications: he and Sandford ſang a humorous ballad-epilogue in the character of two ſtreet ballad-ſingers; the ſame, I believe, which, many years afterwards, was ſung by that droll, honeſt, agreeable fellow, Jemmy Bencroft, and Nat Clarke.—I call him Jemmy, becauſe it will better revive his memory, among his ſurviving friends, than by the addition which he afterwards merited of James Bencroft, Eſq. patentee of Covent-Garden theatre.

In the play of the Man's the Maſter, Harris had the misfortune to wound Cademan in the eye, by uſing a ſharp inſtead of a foil, which diſabled him from acting ever after. Cademan received a pen-

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* By looking carefully over the Roſcius Anglicanus, I find that Harris was originally of the king's company, but ſoon left it to join Betterton.

ſion from the players, on that account, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, as long as he lived, for he enjoyed it in 1708, thirty-five years after the accident.

Booth ſucceeded Betterton in Henry VIII. To ſupport the dignity of the prince, and yet retain that vein of humour which pervades this character, requires great caution in the actor. Without particular attention, Harry will be manufactured into a royal bully or ridiculous buffoon. Booth was particularly happy in preſerving the true ſpirit of the part through the whole play. Mr. Macklin, who had the good fortune to ſee him ſeveral times in Harry, has declared that he ſhone in the character with particular luſtre. Quin, who had the good ſenſe to admire and imitate Booth, and the honeſty to own it, kept as near as poſſible to his great exemplar's portrait; but Quin was deficient in flexibility as well as ſtrength of voice; he could not utter impetuous and vehement anger with vigour, nor dart tremendous looks; all which were ſuited to the happier organs and countenance of Booth. He was, beſides, a ſtranger to grace in action or deportment.—Booth walked with the eaſe of a gentleman and the dignity of a monarch. The grandeur and magnificence of Henry were, in Booth, ſuſtained to the height.

How the managers took it into their heads to give this part to Harper, during Booth's laſt illneſs, I cannot conceive, unleſs his being a fat man was the great recommendation. I could never ſeparate honeſt Jobſon, the cobler, from the prince: he put me in mind of the old ballad of King Harry and the cobler. I ſhould not forget that, when Betterton and Harris acted the king and the cardinal, the little character of Lord Sands was played by Price, frequently mentioned by Downs, as a moſt admirable low comedian.——Why Nokes perſonated ſo ſerious a part as the duke of Norfolk, I cannot conceive: perhaps it was not the great comic actor, but that Nokes who was famous for playing womens characters.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Shakſpeare's hiſtorical plays.—Warnings to prince and people.—Court oppreſſion and miniſterial juggling.—Queen Katherine an advocate for the people.—A horrible tax.—Loans and benevolences.—Duke of Suffolk and Green.—Poverty and neceſſity.—The cunning of miniſters.—Tractable obedience *explained.—Sick interpreters.—George* I. *and his courtiers.—The duke of Buckingham's eloquence.—His title to the crown.—Mrs. Porter.—Mrs. Pritchard.—French Faſhions adopted by the Engliſh.—Maſquerade; game of mumchance.—Banquet with two hundred covers.—Buckingham's condemnation.—Duke of Norfolk's tears.—Earl of Kildare.—Wolſey's malice.—Buckingham deprived of his right.—Reaſon of the king's jealouſy and the people's love.—Wilks in Buckingham.—Archbiſhoprick of Toledo.—Suffolk's character.*

THE plays of Shakſpeare, which are founded on Engliſh hiſtory, are, in my opinion, amongſt our moſt valuable dramatic compoſitions. They contain excellent advice and perpetual warnings to the kings and people of this country. In theſe ineſtimable records they will find a reflecting mirror of their anceſtors, probably of themſelves.—Exact pictures of the preſent and future times I cannot mean; but ſuch general reſemblances of character, in prince and ſubject, as muſt neceſſarily ariſe in a mixed government, like ours; where incroachments, on one ſide, muſt perpetually meet with reſiſtance on the other, and will infallibly produce events not very unlike thoſe which are deſcribed ſo affectingly by our inimitable poet.

The ſcene before us preſents a true picture of court oppreſſion and miniſterial juggling. The author has related the matter in queſtion with ſome tenderneſs to the memory of Henry, and this affords another reaſon why we ſhould ſuppoſe the play was written before the acceſſion of James I. Queen Katharine is judiciouſly choſen to repreſent, to the throne, the grievances of the people, who were burdened by a moſt illegal and oppreſſive impoſt. Shakſpeare here aſſumes the part of the honeſt politician and good citizen. In the conduct of the ſcene, he gives a caution to all ſucceeding princes againſt the undue and illegal exerciſe of their power.

Henry, by his mere arbitrary will, and without aſſembling a parliament, had iſſued out commiſſions, by which he commanded to be levied four ſhillings in the pound from the clergy, and three ſhillings and four pence from the laity. But this unprecedented and horrible taxation ſo diſguſted the people, in all parts of the kingdom, that the king was obliged to revoke the powers he had given, and had recourſe to another unjuſt practice of raiſing money on loans or benevolence: the name was ſofter, but the exaction equally oppreſſive and unlawful. When the act which had paſſed in the reign of Richard III. by which all ſuch methods of raiſing money were aboliſhed, was oppoſed to this mode of taxation, to the diſgrace of the king and miniſters, it was anſwered, 'That Richard being an uſurper, his parliament was an unlawful aſſembly, and their acts of no validity,' which was plainly to declare that an arbitrary tyrant was more careful to diſtribute juſtice and equity to his ſubjects than a lawful prince.

NORFOLK.

The clothiers all, not able to maintain
The many to them 'longing, have put off
The ſpinſters, carders, fullers, weavers, who,
Unfit for other life, and compell'd by hunger,
And lack of other means, are all in uproar.

The duke of Suffolk, who was much beloved, prevailed on many of the wealthieſt clothiers to ſubmit to the royal impoſition; but, on this compliance, they diſcharged all their workmen and manufacturers under the pretence that they could not maintain them. This occaſioned a great inſurrection in the county of Suffolk. The duke ventured his perſon among them, and aſked who was their leader. One Green ſtepped forward and anſwered, "They had two: *Poverty and Neceſſity*." The king, notwithſtanding his arbitrary and boiſterous diſpoſition, was obliged to pardon all who had oppoſed his illegal impoſitions. This, I believe, was the only inſtance of Henry's retracting his once-ſettled purpoſe.

WOLSEY.

——— Pleaſe you, Sir,
I know but of a ſingle part in aught
Pertains to the ſtate.

I am but one, of many counſellors, who, of equal power with myſelf, adviſed this unhappy buſineſs. This is too often the language of a miniſter, who, though univerſally known to govern his maſter, and take the lead in all tranſactions, yet, when queſtioned about any ſtate matter, declares he acts only in his own department.

QUEEN.

——This makes bold mouths,
Tongues ſpit their duties out, and cold hearts freeze
Allegiance; their curſes now

Live where their prayers did; and it comes to paſs
That tractable obedience is a ſlave
To each incenſed will.——

The latter part of this ſpeech is thus ingeniouſly explained by Muſgrave; "Thoſe who are tractable and obedient muſt give way to others who are angry."

But the queen has deſcribed the conſequences which oppreſſion and injuſtice are apt to produce, and therefore intimates that the very perſons, who, before this impoſition, were obedient and tractable ſubjects, are now changed into reſolute oppoſers of government, from motives of juſt reſentment.

WOLSEY.

I have no farther gone in this, than by
A ſingle voice, and that not paſt me, but
By learned approbation of the judges.

Shakſpeare has, in this, followed exactly the thread of hiſtory. The judges, ſays Hume, went ſo far as poſitively to affirm, "The king might exact any ſum of money he pleaſed." We need not be ſurpriſed that his majeſty's privy council gave an aſſent to this decree, which annihilated, at once, all the privileges of the ſubject. It fortunately happened, in this inſtance, though the parliament in general conſpired with the king, through his whole reign, to fix ſhackles on the people, tyranny was obliged to forego its hold.

WOLSEY.

——What we oft do beſt
By ſick interpreters, once weak ones,
Is not ours, or not allow'd.

By ſick interpreters, we are to underſtand *peeviſh or ill-natured expoſitors*, men, who, from an overheated temper, or melancholy diſpoſition, put a wrong conſtruction upon public meaſures.

IDEM.

A word with you. [*Speaking to the ſecretary*]
Let there be letters writ, to every ſhire,
Of the king's grace and pardon:
———Let it be nois'd
That, through our interceſſion, this revokement
And pardon comes.

The miniſter's filching from his royal maſter the honour of beſtowing grace and pardon on the ſubject, appeared ſo groſs and impudent a prevarication, that, when this play was acted before George I. at Hampton-Court, about the year 1717, the courtiers laughed ſo loudly at this miniſterial craft, that his majeſty, who was unacquainted with the Engliſh language, aſked the lord-chamberlain the meaning of their mirth; upon being informed of it, the king joined in a laugh of approbation.

KING.

——— And when we,
Almoſt with liſtening raviſh'd———

The duke of Buckingham's eloquence has been recorded by the old hiſtorians, who pretend to ſay he inherited the gift from his father, once the boſom counſellor of Richard III. who made uſe of his art in ſpeaking to cajole the citizens of London, and to perſuade them that his title to the crown was better founded than that of his nephew.

SURVEYOR:

——— If the king
Should die without iſſue, he'd carry it ſo
To make the ſceptre his.

It was this nobleman's misfortune to have a remote title to the ſucceſſion of the crown. He was deſcended, by a female, from the duke of Gloſter, youngeſt ſon of Edward III.

In the ſcene before us, the deportment of the actors, when the play was revived in 1727, was much approved. Booth did not command attention more by attraction of figure and juſt elocution, than by the propriety of his action and the ſtatelineſs of his ſtep. The buſineſs of Wolſey, in this ſcene, being confined to addreſs, caution, and management, was not unſuitably repreſented by Colley Cibber. But the dignity and grace of a queen were never, perhaps, more happily ſet off than by Mrs. Porter. There was an elevated conſequence in the manner of that actreſs, which ſince her time, I have in vain ſought for in her ſucceſſors.

Her firſt ſpeech to the king, after kneeling to him, was uttered with ſuch intelligence and ſenſibility, that ſhe commanded the applauſe as well as attention, of the audience. The words are ſimple, and, ſeemingly, unimportant; but ſhe underſtood her author well, and, in delivering them, conveyed the prime duties of the kingly office with energy.

> *That you would love yourſelf, and, in that love,*
> *Not unconſidered leave your honour, nor*
> *The dignity* of your office, is the point
> Of my petition.

Her conduct, in the whole ſcene, was a mixture of graceful elocution and dignified behaviour.

Mrs. Pritchard, in Queen Katharine, was eaſy in her addreſs and natural in her expreſſion, but unaccompanied by that grace and dignity which her predeceſſor, Mrs. Porter, knew ſo well to aſſume.

Scene III.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN.

———All the good our Engliſh
Have got by our laſt voyage is but merely
A fit or two o'th' face.

Our neighbours of France have, time out of mind, conſtantly led the way in new faſhions and fopperies; and we have as conſtantly imitated and reproached them for it. Grimace of countenance is here ſatirized. Dryden, in the epilogue to his Aſtrologer, charges a mimic of French abſurdities with a different kind of affectation:

Up ſtarts a monſieur, new come o'er, and warm
In the French ſtoop and pull-back of the arm.

Scene IV.

SERVANT.

————A noble troop of ſtrangers,
For ſo they ſeem; they've left their barge and landed,
And hitherto make as great ambaſſadors
From foreign princes.

This viſit of the King and Courtiers, maſqued, to the Cardinal, is taken from Hollingſhead; our poet has artfully introduced Anne Bullen to attract the notice of the King for the firſt time, an incident, which is not in the original. The maſkers, ſays the Chronicle, were dreſſed moſt gorgeouſly, and brought with them a large gold cup filled with crowns and other pieces of gold, which were to be played for at a game called *mum-chance*, I ſuppoſe from the ſilence obſerved during play, and the chance of the die. The maſkers poured out of the cup, before the Cardinal, their winnings and loſings,

ings, which amounted to about two hundred crowns. —‘ At all,’ ſaid the Cardinal; and, throwing the die, he won the whole.*

CARDINAL.

There ſhould be one amongſt them, by his perſon,
More worthy this place than myſelf.

This incident is likewiſe taken from Hollingſhead, though Shakſpeare has properly enough graced Wolſey with the good fortune to ſelect his royal maſter from the reſt. He really miſtook Sir Edward Nevil, who was diſguiſed with a black beard, for the king, who laughed at the blunder, and immediately pulled off his maſk.

WOLSEY.

Sir Thomas Lovel, is the banquet ready
In the privy-chamber?

At this after-banquet, where the king himſelf preſided, no leſs than two hundred covered diſhes were placed on the table.

Act II. Scene the firſt.

The account of the D. of Buckingham's trial is faithfully and pathetically deſcribed from our old Chronicles. The duke of Norfolk, who was lord-high ſteward at this memorable trial, on paſſing ſentence upon the noble priſoner, could not refrain from ſhedding tears; perhaps reflecting that Buckingham's misfortune might one day be his own.

GENTLEMAN.

————Certainly,
The Cardinal is the end of this.

That is, Wolſey was the chief promoter of Buckingham's fall.

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* Hollingſhead, Vol. II.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

'Tis likely,
By all conjectures: firſt Kildare's attainder——

The caſe of Lord Kildare will perhaps, more than any other circumſtance, throw a light upon the real character of the cardinal.

The Earl of Kildare was accuſed, before the king and council, of divers high crimes, by Wolſey. He anſwered the cardinal's accuſation with ſuch force, that he cleared himſelf to the king's ſatisfaction.—He was afterwards tried and condemned, and impriſoned in the Tower; but the king was prevailed upon to grant him a pardon. Wolſey, notwithſtanding, had the inſolence and cruelty to ſend orders to the lieutenant of the Tower to ſee him executed privately there: he, being the earl's friend, informed the king of the cardinal's orders; who in great wrath reproved Wolſey, and diſcharged the earl from his impriſonment.*

BUCKINGHAM.

There cannot be thoſe numberleſs offences
'Gainſt me I can't take peace with: no black *envy*
Shall make my grave.

Mr. Steevens has rightly obſerved, though he adduced no inſtance of it, That Shakſpeare ſometimes uſes the word *envy* inſtead of *malice* or *hatred*. Wolſey, in a ſubſequent ſcene with the King and Campeius, applies the word in the ſame ſenſe as here: ſpeaking of the intended trial for the divorce, he ſays,

Who can be angry now? what *envy* reach you?

'What malicious tongues will now dare to reproach your conduct, ſince you have ſubmitted to a fair and impartial trial?'— The Duke, moſt feelingly and like a Chriſtian, declares, that malice ſhall have no ſhare in his latter end: ‘I ſhall deprive bad minds of the power to ſlander my laſt moments with a report of my dying with a rancorous or unforgiving temper.’

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* Lord Herbert.

BUCKINGHAM.

——— I was lord-high-conſtable
And Duke of Buckingham.

The office of high-conſtable of England expired with this nobleman.

IDEM.

——— I had my trial,
And muſt needs ſay a noble one.

The king, knowing that the evidence againſt the unfortunate duke was ſo full and complete that he could not poſſibly be acquitted, ſent him word that he ſhould enjoy all the advantages which the law would allow him. However, the king robbed him, in one material inſtance, of his right; as a peer of the realm he had a juſt claim to be tried by all the peers. The Duke of Buckingham's jury conſiſted only of a duke, a marquis, ſeven earls, and twelve barons.

Although there is no reaſon to doubt the juſtneſs of the ſentence paſſed upon Buckingham, his crimes proceeded rather from levity and folly than deliberate malice. The people loved him, and were in hopes the king would have extended mercy to him. But his alliance to the crown prevented all hopes of pardon. Henry's jealouſy of all claims of that kind rendered him implacable. His father, Henry VII. murdered the earl of Warwick for no other reaſon but his having a better title to the crown than himſelf. The greateſt crime, too, of Mary Queen of Scotland, in the eyes of Elizabeth,

beth, was the goodneſs of her title; and James her ſon, ſhamefully perſecuted Lady Arabella Stewart, becauſe ſhe was a-kin to the royal family.

To the reader of this play the part of Buckingham may ſeem to be of little or no conſequence; but there is an affecting pathos in it which the actor of merit will diſcover and exemplify in action and elocution. When the play was revived, as above related, the incomparable Wilks thought Buckingham worthy his attention. In the firſt ſcene, at the opening of the play, the reſentment and indignation of the character to Wolſey broke out, in Wilks, with an impetuoſity reſembling haſty ſparks of fire; his action was vehement, and his motion quick and diſturbed. His demeanour, when condemned, was gentle, graceful, and pathetic; his grief was manly, reſigned, and temperate: ſuch as became the nobleman and the Chriſtian.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

—Merely to revenge him on the emperor,
For not beſtowing on him, at his aſking,
The archbiſhopric of Toledo.

Nothing could ſatisfy the unbounded ambition and avarice of Wolſey. — Shakſpeare is juſtified in alledging this fact. The Archbiſhop of Toledo is primate of Spain, great chancellor of Caſtile, and proprietor of ſeventeen towns and a great number of villages; his yearly revenue is computed at 75000l. The King of Spain generally reſerves it for the youngeſt branch of his family.

Scene II.

NORFOLK.

—— This imperious man will work us
From princes into pages.

Wolſey had no leſs than nine noblemen in his retinue.

SUFFOLK.
As I am made without him, ſo I'll ſtand

Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who married the Queen-dowager of France, ſiſter to Henry VIII. was one of the moſt amiable noblemen of the age he lived in: brave, generous, condeſcending, and humane, his popularity was the well-earned tribute of his virtues. That Henry, though precipitate, tyrannical, and cruel, was capable of ſincere and cordial friendſhip, is apparent from his inviolable attachment to Suffolk and Cranmer: the latter he protected from all his powerful enemies, and the former he loved with a friendſhip that was inviolable. When news was brought of Suffolk's death, he was ſitting in council.—He embraced the occaſion to expreſs his deep regret for the loſs of his brother, and to bear teſtimony to his virtues: he averred that, during the whole period of their friendſhip, which grew up from infancy, he had never attempted to injure an adverſary, nor had ever, in his hearing, dropped a word to the diſadvantage of any man. Then, looking round him, he ſaid, with ſome emotion, 'Is there any of you, my lords, can ſay ſo much?' When Henry ſpoke theſe words, he diſcovered in their faces that confuſion which is the companion of conſcious guilt.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIX.

Word goodneſs *explained.—Pace why called a fool.—Validity of the King's marriage tried.—Clement* VII.*—The Queen not placed properly at the trial.—Character of Ferdinand King of Spain.—Mrs. Porter's elevated manner.—Booth's 'Go thy ways, Kate.'—Quin.—The King's ſcruples.—Mrs. Pritchard.—Mrs. Porter.—Booth and Macklin.—Henry's confeſſor.—The King's true reaſons for a divorce.—'Weigh out afflictions' explained.—Fuller's character of Henry.—Reaſons for Wolſey's behaviour in the buſineſs of the divorce.—Henry's ſymbol of diſpleaſure.*

WOLSEY.

Muſt now confeſs, if we have any *goodneſs*,
The trial juſt and noble.

THE word *goodneſs* ſtands here for *impartiality, juſtice,* or *equity.*

CAMPEIUS.

Kept Pace a foreign man.

It is no uncommon practice of miniſters, when they cannot mould an officer of ſtate to their own faſhion, to keep him at diſtance from the court, under ſome honourable title abroad.

WOLSEY.

——— He was a fool.
For he would needs be virtuous.

The Cardinal means, that Pace would have the aſſurance to think for himſelf.—And, for this perverſeneſs, Wolſey ruined him.

HENRY.

——— O my lord,
Would it not grieve an able man to leave
So ſweet a bedfellow?

It is remarkable that Henry and Queen Katharine lay in the ſame bed till the trial for the validity of the marriage was opened.

Scene between Anne Bullen and the Old Lady.

OLD LADY.

Pluck off a little.

The lady, in my opinion, means,——— ‘ Draw aſide that affected veil of modeſty you have put on. Do not diſguiſe your ſentiments with artificial coverings.’

CHAMBERLAIN.

——— And who knows yet,
But from this lady may proceed a gem
To lighten all this iſle?

This gem was Queen Elizabeth; and this may ſerve amongſt other proofs that the author wrote this play during the life of that princeſs.

OLD LADY.

How taſtes it? Is it bitter? Forty-pence—no.

The fee of an attorney for advice, as well as term-fee, was then, as now, 3 s. 4 d.

Act II. Scene IV.

The Trial.

The trial of the validity of a king's marriage, before perſons delegated for that purpoſe, in a court where the royal perſons were ſummoned, and did actually appear, was an occurrence new and extraordinary, which drew the attention of all Europe. The legality or illegality of marriages amongſt the great, before that period, had been determined at the court of Rome by the ſole power of the pontiff.—Nor would Clement VII. the then reigning pope, have parted with ſuch a privilege, had not the reformation, which began about twelve years before the trial by Luther, made ſuch an alarming progreſs as induced him to act cautiouſly with a prince of Henry's reſolute and undaunted temper.—However, the pope ſtill kept in his hands the power of ſhortening or lengthening the proceſs, and of eſtabliſhing or diſſolving the court, which was opened, at Black-Friers, May 31, 1529.

In the diſtribution of the ſeveral perſons who compoſed this learned and illuſtrious aſſembly, Shakſpear had, I think, with great propriety, ſeated the Queen at ſome diſtance from the King. Why modern managers ſhould all concur to make an alteration in his ſtage-œconomy I can diſcover no good reaſon: for if, in the infancy of the ſtage when they had ſcarcely room to diſplay their figures to advantage, they could place a throne or ſeat for ſuch a perſonage as a Queen, ſurely, with a much larger area, every embelliſhment and neceſſary decoration need not be omitted.—Beſides, as it is now managed, the Queen is ſuppoſed to wait like a common ſuitor or culprit till ſhe is ſummoned into the court: whereas the riſing from her ſeat, when called by the Crier, would be attended with more conſequence, and give an opportunity to the actreſs by her deportment to gain the attention of the ſpectators.

QUEEN.

Sir, I deſire you do me right and juſtice,
And to beſtow your pity, &c.

The greateſt part of Katharine's ſpeech is indeed faithfully tranſcribed from our Chronicles, but much heightened by pathetic expoſtulation, warmth of paſſion, and dignity of reſentment

QUEEN.

——— Ferdinand,
My father, King of Spain, was reckon'd one
The wiſeſt prince that there had reign'd by many
A year before.

If poſſeſſing the art of acquiring territories by fraud, perfidy, cruelty, and injuſtice; if the putting in practice every machination to circumvent and betray; can be termed the arts of wiſdom, Ferdinand, called the Catholic, King of Spain, was of all kings the wiſeſt. Strange, that the commiſſion of enormities, which would ſubject a private man to an ignominious puniſhment, ſhould be eſteemed meritorious in a crowned head!

WOLSEY.

——— I do profeſs.
You ſpeak not like yourſelf.

The Cardinal's defence of his conduct is temperate and artful. Shakſpeare, who in this play treads no ground without warrant, has in this ſcene alſo traced our beſt Chronicles.

QUEEN.

——— I muſt tell you,
That you tender more your perſon's honour
Than your high profeſſion ſpiritual.

Wolſey was ſuppoſed not to have favoured the cauſe of the queen, from private animoſity; ſhe had publicly reproached him with his licentious manner of living.

Mrs. Pritchard's Queen Katharine has been much approved, and eſpecially in this ſcene of the trial. She certainly was in behaviour eaſy, and in ſpeaking natural and familiar; but the ſituation of the character required more force in utterance and more dignity in action. Mrs. Porter's manner was elevated to the rank of the great perſon ſhe repreſented. Her kneeling to the King was the effect of majeſty in diſtreſs and humbled royalty; it was indeed highly affecting; the ſuppreſſion of her tears when ſhe reproached the Cardinal, beſpoke the tumultuous conflict in her mind, before ſhe burſt into that manifeſtation of indignity, ſhe felt in being obliged to anſwer ſo unworthy an interrogator.

KING.

Go thy ways, Kate!

Mr. Macklin, our theatrical Neſtor, will tell us, that Booth pronounced theſe four ſhort words with ſuch happy emphaſis, conveying at once characteriſtical humour and liberal acknowledgment of Katharine's virtuous excellence, that the audience not only applauded, but admired, the ſpeaker.

Quin borrowed ſomething of Booth's manner in uttering this valediction; but I am afraid he mixed in it a little of Falſtaff's ſtyle.

KING.

———————Oft have hinder'd
The paſſages made towards it.

That is, 'You have rather thrown obſtacles in the way of this buſineſs than promoted it.'

IDEM.

My conſcience firſt receiv'd a tenderneſs
And *prick*.

Prick of conſcience, ſays Dr. Johnſon, was the term in confeſſion; and the ſweet prick of conſcience was transferred from the popiſh prieſts to the Calviniſt paſtors, eſpecially thoſe of Scotland.

IDEM.

——————For her male iſſue,
Or died when they were made, or ſhortly after
This world had air'd them.

The King, it is ſaid, was ſtruck with this misfortune, becauſe the curſe of being childleſs is the very threatening of the Moſaical law againſt thoſe who eſpouſe the brother's widow.

IDEM.

————I began, in private,
With you, my lord of Lincoln.

The Biſhop of Lincoln was Henry's confeſſor.

IDEM.

How under my oppreſſion I did *reek.*

Reek is a coarſe, though ſignificant, metaphor, taken from a man's ſweating under a heavy burden.

IDEM.

To you, my lord of Canterbury.

Warham was then Archbiſhop of Canterbury, and not Cranmer, as hinted in ſome editions of this play.

IDEM.

Prove but our marriage lawful,————
——————we are contented
To wear our mortal ſtate to come with her,
Kath'rine, our queen, before the primeſt creature
That's paragon'd in the world.

Notwithſtanding this very public and ſolemn proteſtation, which I think Shakſpeare has faithfully tranſcribed from the Chronicle, Henry's private reaſons, which he ſent to the pope, contain very different differrent motives. The following is a tranſlation from a curious Latin record:

"There are, beſides, ſome particular reaſons to be laid before his holineſs in private, though not proper to be committed to writing; upon which account, as well as by reaſon of ſome diſtempers which the queen labours under, without hopes of remedy, as, likewiſe, through ſome certain ſcruples which diſturb the king's conſcience, *his majeſty neither can nor will, for the future, look upon her, or live with her, for his lawful wife, let the conſequence be what it will.*"

The king's ardent paſſion to have male iſſue ſeems to have been the great motive for his divorce from Katherine. He had a ſon, by her, chriſtened Henry, who died two months after his birth: and this he uſed to ſay, was a judgment upon him for marrying his brother's wife. The ſame eager deſire to have a male child, and his diſappointment, occaſioned his unconquerable averſion to Anne Bullen. This unhappy lady was delivered of a dead male; thence, it is ſuppoſed, he ſought all methods to ruin her.

IDEM.

> My learned and well-beloved ſervant, Cranmer,
> Pr'ythee return——

Quin ſpoke this apoſtrophe to Cranmer in a low voice, but ſo melodiouſly and well tuned, as to be heard diſtinctly in every part of the theatre.

IDEM.

> Break up the court.

Notwithſtanding Shakſpeare has, in this paſſage, ſeemed to have diſſolved this famous aſſembly, it actually continued to ſit and do buſineſs for ſome time. The king was ſo angry at their dilatory proceedings, that he employed the duke of Suffolk as a meſſenger to them, who ſharply reproved their ſtudied procraſtination; and, vehemently ſtriking the table with his hand, he told Wolſey, "That it never was well with England when cardinals had the management of affairs."—Wolſey replied ſhortly, "That, if it had not been for one cardinal, the duke of Suffolk would not have kept his head on his ſhoulders."*

Act III. Scene I.

Queen Katharine, Wolſey, and Campeius:

This ſcene is omitted, in the repreſentation, as tedious and unneceſſary. However, as it farther diſplays Queen Katharine's temper and diſpoſition, and contains many characteriſtical features of that unhappy lady, it well deſerves our attention. It is, in general, a tranſcript from Hollingſhead, paraphraſed and enlarged with correſpondent matter.

QUEEN.

I was ſet at work
Amongſt my maids

When Queen Katharine was informed that the cardinals Wolſey and Campeius deſired audience, ſhe came to them with a ſkein of thread about her neck; nor would ſhe retire with them into her private chamber, as they requeſted, till after a conference ſuch as the poet has given us.

IDEM.

Nay, forſooth my friends.
That muſt weigh out my afflictions.

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* Fuller,

This *weighing out of afflictions* is, I think, a metaphor taken from the unloading of a ſhip. Thoſe friends, who are moſt capable of eaſing me of afflictions, are at a great diſtance from me.

QUEEN.

Almoſt forgot my prayers to content him!
And am I thus rewarded?

Fuller's ſhort character of Katharine is no ill anſwer to the lady's complaint:

"*Queen Katharine's age was above her huſband's, her gravity above her age, more pious at her beads than pleaſant in her bed, a better woman than a wife, and a fitter wife for any prince than Henry.*"

Scene II.

Lord-Chamberlain, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Surry.

CHAMBERLAIN.

The cardinal's letter, to the pope, miſcarried,
And came to the eye of the king, wherein was read
How that the cardinal did intreat his holineſs
To ſtay the judgment of the divorce.

This is conformable to Hollingſhead's relation.

Hiſtorians are at a loſs to account for Wolſey's behaviour in the trial for the divorce. He certainly had the whole management of the buſineſs in his own power; for Campeius was but ſecond in the commiſſion, and, conſequently, he might have terminated the matter to his maſter's wiſh. At this diſtance of time it is difficult to aſcertain the real motive by which Wolſey was influenced. The king's paſſions, he knew, would brook no controul: it was dangerous to oppoſe them. But, it ſhould be remembered, that the cardinal's ambition aimed at the triple crown, and that, during

the

the trial, Pope Clement was ſeiſed with ſo dangerous an illneſs that it was feared it would terminate only with his life. Wolſey, who had before been twice a candidate for the papacy, again had his hopes renewed. Had he decided the buſineſs of the divorce in favour of the king, he would have loſt the interpoſition of the emperor, Queen Katharine's nephew, without whoſe intereſt he could not poſſibly ſucceed. Clement's recovery put an end to Wolſey's dream of the papacy, and expoſed him to the reſentment of Anne Bullen and her party, who took indefatigable pains to incenſe the king againſt him. This part of Wolſey's hiſtory, reſpecting the papacy, has not, except in one place, been touched upon by Shakſpeare.

SUFFOLK.

——— I do aſſure you
The king cry'd Ha! at this.

CHAMBERLAIN.

Now God incenſe him,
And let him cry Ha! louder.

Henry's ſign of diſpleaſure was uſually marked by a loud exploſion of the interjection Ha! or Ho! and this behaviour, more ſuitable to the hog-driver than the prince, ſerved to terrify and keep in awe his ſlaviſh and timorous courtiers. For this prognoſtic was matter of the utmoſt diſmay to them.

There is a ſtory, in Fuller's Worthies, of a weak effeminate boy, who perſonated Henry VIII. in a certain play written on that ſtory, who cried ho! in ſo feeble a tone, that one of his brother performers told him, 'that he acted more like a mouſe than a man; and that, if he ſpoke ho! with no better ſpirit, his parliament would not grant him a penny of money.'

CHAP-

CHAPTER XX.

Cibber ſnuffing a candle.—Nobles betting for and againſt Wolſey's favour with the King.—Wolſey's immenſe riches.—Henry's anger, as expreſſed by Booth.—Surry's impetuoſity.—His character.—Curious article againſt Wolſey.—Cranmer, Archbiſhop of Canterbury.—Explanation of 'Cheriſh thoſe that hate you.'—The great art of Shakſpeare in a ſcene of the 3d act.—Cibber and Moſſop criticiſed.—Digges commended.—Wolſey's preſent of a fool to the King.—Baniſhed to his dioceſe by Norfolk.—Arreſted for high treaſon.—His death.—Wolſey's ambition to be pope.—Hume refuted.—Wolſey's love of learning and encouragement of learned men.—Eraſmus and Wolſey.—The latter's ſelfiſhneſs, pride, and cruelty.—His ſuperſtitious and vindictive temper.—Soft muſic.—Viſion of angels.—Bayes's grand dance.—Queen Katharine's character.—Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Porter.—Mrs. Willis and Theophilus Cibber.—Gardiner's character.—Jonſon's, Hippiſley's, and Taſwell's repreſentation of him.—The King, Surry, and Norfolk.—Power of braſs to invigorate the eye-ſight.—Plutarch and Macrobius.—Character of Queen Elizabeth, as drawn by Shakſpeare.—Dr. Hurd and Mr. Hume.—England moſt indebted to her worſt princes.—Calderone's Spaniſh play on the ſubject of Henry VIII.

WOLSEY.

This candle burns not clear; 'tis I muſt ſnuff it;
And out it goes.

THE action of Colley Cibber, in ſpeaking this, I have heard much commended: he imitated, with his fore-finger and thumb, the extinguiſhing of a candle with a pair of ſnuffers. But ſurely the reader will laugh at ſuch mimicry, which, if practiſed, would make a player's action as ridiculous as a monkey's.

Enter the king reading a ſchedule.

The whole ſcene, to the end of the third act, is the genuine contrivance of the poet—Though the King had given Wolſey evident marks of his diſpleaſure, and often rated him in his boiſterous manner,—and particularly once, at Grafton, in Northamptonſhire, when the nobility, who hated him, laid bets for and againſt his retaining the king's affection,—yet, at that time, we have authority to ſay, Wolſey ſtood his ground ſo well, that he departed from the king's preſence with marks of favour rather than diſpleaſure.—This was the laſt time of Henry and Wolſey's meeting.

KING.

What piles of wealth hath he accumulated !

It is impoſſible to read the inventory of Wolſey's riches, as it ſtands in our Chronicles, without aſtoniſhment and indignation.—The walls of his palace were covered with cloth of gold or cloth of ſilver ; his cupboard contained maſſy plate of gold.—A thouſand pieces of fine Holland and the reſt of the furniture in proportion.—To eſtimate his riches at half a million will not, by thoſe who carefully attend to authentic hiſtorians, be ſuppoſed to overtate them. How impoveriſhed and wretched muſt the people be, when a prodigal king, a graſping miniſter, and a ſlaviſh parliament, all combined to drain them of their money.!

NORFOLK.

——— My lord, we have
Stood here obſerving him. Some ſtrange commotion
Is in his mind.

The deſcription of Wolſey's deportment during the perturbation of his mind, ſo ſtrongly depicted in his ſoliloquy, is an evident proof, that, although Shakſpeare was not a ſkilful actor himſelf, he knew perfectly well what was due to character. He has here given a leſſon to the repreſenter of Wolſey which the moſt conſummate player may be proud to learn.

KING.

——— And then to breakfaſt—*with*
What appetite you may.

Henry's anger ſhould be reſerved by the actor till he pronounces, ' With what appetite you may.' This is confirmed by what the Cardinal ſays immediately after the King's departure :

What *ſudden* anger's this ?

The tremendous look which Booth put on, with his rapid and vehement expreſſion, fully correſponded with the deſign of the author.

NORFOLK.

Deliver up the great ſeal.

The king ſent for the great ſeal. but Wolſey refuſed it, as Shakſpeare has recorded it ; nor did he return it till the King wrote to him, and commanded him to deliver it.

SURRY.

——— By my ſoul,
Your long coat, prieſt, protects you ; thou ſhould'ſt elſe
Feel my ſword in the life-blood of thee.

In this vehement burſt of paſſion, the writer has drawn the characteriſtical blemiſh of Surry : brave, learned, generous, and accompliſhed, with many ſplendid qualities, which equally gained him the love and admiration of his own countrymen and foreigners, he was ſometimes betrayed into that warmth of temper which juſtly expoſed him to reprehenſion. In a diſpute once with Wolſey, he was ſo far tranſported beyond himſelf as to draw his dagger.*

The reſentment which the earl felt to the miniſter, on account of the part he bore in the trial of his father-in-law, the Duke of Buckingham, induced our poet to make uſe of his agency to reproach the cardinal, with more impetuoſity and bitterneſs than he allotted to any of the other peers.

SURRY.

First, that, without the King's conſent,——
You wrought to be a legate.

The aſſuming the power of a legate was expreſsly contrary to an act paſſed in the reign of Richard II. and left the offender out of the king's protection. It was, however, diſingenuous and cruel to try the Cardinal, upon an obſolete act, and for exerciſing that power, in the face of the world, with the king's conſent and approbation.

Amongſt above forty articles, which were laid to his charge, there was a very ſingular one: 'That, knowing himſelf contaminated with the great pox, he had the impudence to breathe in the king's preſence.'

WOLSEY.

-------------- My high-blown pride
At length broke under me.

The props, by which Wolſey's mind was ſupported, were pomp, pride, grandeur, ſtate, and magnificence: theſe once failing, the man had nothing from within to ſupport his ſpirit, he had no whiſpering comforts from an unſullied conſcience to bear him up againſt the tide of adverſity which was ready to overwhelm him.

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* The people of England can, at this time, boaſt of an Earl of Surry, who is a true friend of liberty, and an undaunted ſupporter of the conſtitution of his country, who enjoys all the virtues of his great anceſtor unmixed with his exceſſes.

WOLSEY.

Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate you!

With what facility do we renounce what we can no longer keep! And how like children do men behave, when they give up thoſe playthings from which they are debarred!

IDEM.

May have a tomb of orphans tears wept on him.

'May his tomb be waſhed with orphans tears, in gratitude for his acts of juſtice to them.'

Wolſey himſelf exerciſed the office of chancellor without reproach.

CROMWELL.

---------- That Cranmer is return'd with welcome,
Inſtall'd Lord Archbiſhop of Canterbury.

This is a ſufficient proof, that Suffolk, in a former part of the ſcene, meant that Cranmer was really returned with a full approbation of his opinions; and not, as Mr. Tyrwhit ſuggeſted, that he was come back only by his ſchedules, or tranſcripts, confirming the validity of a divorce, from foreign univerſities; neither is it likely that Cranmer would ſend that by another which he could not bring himſelf.

WOLSEY.

Cheriſh thoſe hearts that *hate* you.

Dr. Warburton alters *hate* to *wait*; but this editor is known to be an arbitrary foiſter of his own fancies into the text.—He ſays Wolſey neglected his dependents; the contrary, in general, is true; when he and his retinue parted, mutual manifeſtations of grief and tenderneſs were ſeen on both ſides. 'Cheriſh thoſe hearts that hate you' was ſpoken in condemnation of his own conduct, who had provoked the nobility by his pride and inſolence, rather than he would ſoothe them by gentleneſs. His proſecution of Buckingham brought againſt him the family of Norfolk and all their friends. But, again, 'Cheriſh thoſe hearts that hate you' is, according to the precept in the Goſpel, 'Bleſs them that curſe you.' This is a leſſon which Shakſpeare puts into the mouth of a heathen: Flavius the ſteward, on the ſight of Timon, his maſter, in miſery, amongſt other reflections, breaks out into this:

How rarely does it meet with this time's guiſe,
When man was wiſh'd to love his enemies!

IDEM.

Had I but ſerv'd my God with half the zeal
I ſerv'd my king, he would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

This ſentence, ſays Dr. Johnſon, was really uttered by Wolſey; but the words which he ſpoke after this ſentence, as related by Hollingſhead, are equally pathetic, and are well worth preſerving: "But it is the juſt reward that I muſt receive for the diligent pains and ſtudy that I have had to do him ſervice, not regarding my ſervice to God, but only to ſatisfy his pleaſure."

When we look back and conſider the foregoing ſcene, from the entrance of the Cardinal to his concluding ſpeech at the end of the third act, we muſt confeſs that the poet has wrought up the whole with great dramatic ſkill. The hiſtorical incidents, or events, are rendered extremely intereſting, while the characters and paſſions of the great perſonages introduced ſupport the dialogue with uncommon vigour. The art of Shakſpeare has, in the concluſion, rendered the man, who had been the object of our diſguſt and hatred, the ſource of tenderneſs and commiſeration.—If the rough and bitter terms of reproach, in the mouths of princes and nobles, ſhould diſpleaſe a modern taſte, it ſhould be conſidered, that the author draws a faithful picture of manners ſuch as he found authenticated in hiſtory, and ſuch as, with very little variation, would in a ſimilar ſituation take place in all times; for paſſions will eternally be the ſame, and ſpeak nearly the ſame language.

If the repreſentation of this ſcene has, in general fallen ſhort of the writer's intention and the ſpectators expectation, we muſt, in a great meaſure, attribute that to the difficulty of performing it with excellence. Colley Cibber's pride and paſſion, in Wolſey, were impotent, and almoſt farcical. His grief, reſignation, and tenderneſs, were inadequate, from a deficiency of thoſe powers of expreſſion which the melting tones of voice, and a correſponding propriety of geſture, can alone beſtow.—Moſſop was a powerful and energetic ſpeaker of ſentiment, and, ſometimes, happy in the utterance of paſſion. But his ſtatelineſs, in a part of this ſcene, was without dignity, and his tenderneſs without pathos. Digges aſſumed uncommon grandeur of deportment, which ſometimes degenerated into bombaſtical ſtrutting. To the reſigned portion of the character, the grave tones of his voice were not ill-ſuited. Had he kept within thoſe modeſt bounds preſcribed by Shakſpeare, he would have drawn an excellent outline of the imperious Wolſey.

Act IV.

Scene II. Queen, Griffith, &c.

Notwithſtanding his ſavage diſpoſition, the king could not at once abandon his favourite miniſter.

At different times he condeſcended to ſhew him tokens of his favour and returning friendſhip. The cardinal was ſo tranſported with joy on his royal maſter's ſending him a ring, which he conceived to be a certain evidence of his protection,—that he diſmounted from his horſe and would receive it on his knees. To manifeſt his gratitude, he ſent to the king, as the moſt valuable of all gifts, his *fool, Patch,* whom he had cheriſhed as one reſerve of happineſs, or, at leaſt, amuſement, in his misfortunes; but the poor cardinal was ſtill wedded to vanity and oſtentation: he travelled to York, whither he was obliged to go by order of the duke of Norfolk, who threatened, "If he refuſed, to tear him in pieces with his teeth:*" He travelled I ſay, with a retinue of one hundred and ſixty perſons in order to be inſtalled. The preparations, for this inſtalment, were exceedingly magnificent, and beyond all reaſonable limits. This unhappy reliſh for human grandeur was, in all probability, the immediate cauſe of his ruin. Had he remained quiet in his dioceſe, his enemies would, perhaps, have been at a loſs for matter to excite the king's anger againſt him; but, on the report of his oſtentatious manner of living, Anne Bullen, inſtigated by the duke of Norfolk, her uncle, never ceaſed to ply the king with accuſations againſt him, till, at laſt, Henry, notwithſtanding he had granted him a pardon drawn up in the moſt ample terms, commanded the earl of Northumberland to arreſt him for high treaſon, and bring him to his trial. Wolſey, who knew that his maſter never ruined any man by halves, dreaded the conſequence ſo much, that, Cavendiſh ſays, he diſpatched himſelf by a powerful doſe.—He had no leſs, ſays Hollingſhead, than fifty ſtools in one day.

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* Vide Cavendiſh.

QUEEN.

——— Ever ranking himſelf
With princes.

The man whoſe ambition aimed to be ſuperior to all crowned heads, by getting poſſeſſion of the papal tiara, could never conſider himſelf as a ſubject; eſpecially when he was accoſted and ſaluted by the flattering titles of friend, father, and counſellor, by emperors and kings. Hume is of opinion that, if Wolſey had once gained the papacy, he would have had it in his power to have amply repaid his maſter for all marks of favour he had beſtowed on him. From the arrogance of the man I ſhould rather ſuſpect he would have acted the part of Thomas-a-Becket, who, from a faithful ſervant to his prince, while a layman, proved, when raiſed to the ſee of Canterbury, the greateſt oppoſer of his royal maſter's will. But, not to dwell upon conjecture, let me aſk if Wolſey's promotion would have altered the ſtate of Italy? Would not the emperor be ſtill as powerful there as he was before the cardinal's exaltation? Would he not have found it as eaſy to humble him as the preceding pope, whom he had beſieged in his capital and reduced to the laſt extremity? Wolſey muſt of neceſſity, have adapted his politics to his ſituation.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

——— One that by ſuggeſtion
Ty'd all the kingdom.

I know no word more forcible, to expreſs what ſeems to be the author's meaning, than *ty'd*. The inſinuations of an unfeeling miniſter, to perſuade his royal maſter to chain down the minds of his ſubjects, cannot be put into ſtronger language. Dr. Farmer's propoſed alteration of *tith'd* is inferior in its original meaning, and deficient in its general application. Dr. Farmer is a moſt reſpectable name on every account; but Mr. Tollet has very juſtly defended a reading which is ſupported by all the editions.

GRIFFITH.

From his cradle,
He was a ſcholar, and a ripe and good one.

Wolſey's love of learning, and his conſtant encouragement of it, was the moſt amiable part of his character.

To the revival of learning in this nation he contributed more than all our clergy and nobility. His mind was ſuſceptible of that reputation and glory which the encouragement of the fine arts and the belles-lettres can only beſtow, an honour ſuperior to the noiſy fame of military atchievements. Wolſey was one of the ſelect few of his age who enjoyed a juſt and elegant taſte for literature. An hiſtorian* has preſerved ſome extracts from a method of teaching and educating youth, addreſſed by him to the maſters of a ſchool which he founded at Ipſwich, in which he has diſplayed ſo good a ſtyle, ſuch ſolid judgment, and a taſte ſo refined, that it reflects the higheſt honour upon the writer. When Wolſey ſpeaks of the fifth claſs, there is, in his inſtructions, ſomething ſo truly liberal, that I cannot forbear tranſcribing the paſſage:—'*Imprimis, hoc unum admonendum cenſuerimus, ut neque plagis ſeverioribus, neque vultuoſis minis, aut ulla tyrannidis ſpecie, tenera pubes afficiatur: hac enim injuria, ingenii alacritas aut extingui, aut magna ex parte obtundi ſolet.*' 'Above all things, I think it proper to admoniſh you, that tender youth ſhould not be afflicted with ſevere ſcourgings, with boiſterous threatenings, nor with any ſpecies of tyranny. For, by ſuch treatment, a lively genius is either quite overwhelmed, or in a great meaſure blunted.*

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* Guthrie.

In the concluſion of advice to the ſeventh claſs, wherein he recommends the indulging them with ſuitable amuſements, he diſcovers a moſt amiable and benevolent ſpirit. Milton, in his letter to Mr. Hartlib on education, has happily extended and improved this part of the Cardinal's plan.

IDEM.

Exceeding wiſe, fair-ſpoken, and perſuading.

In confirmation of this part of Wolſey's character, we have the authority of Eraſmus. "His manners (ſays this writer in his Epiſtles) betray nothing of his birth; he diligently employs himſelf in reviving the liberal arts." In fine, York-place, like the houſes of Lucullus, Cicero, Atticus, and other great men of Rome, was an agreeable retreat for all men of letters, without diſtinction. For the compiling a collection of books and MSS. that might vie with the Alexandrian library, he employed learned men, all over Europe, or wherever he could find them. No mechanic ever toiled more aſſiduouſly, in his profeſſion, than Wolſey did to adorn England with luminaries of learning. This anxiety of the cardinal, to encourage literature, and to introduce the beſt ſcholars in Europe amongſt his countrymen, ſeems utterly incompatible with Dr. Middleton's account of Wolſey's ſpeech to the clergy, in which he publicly forewarned them, that, if they did not deſtroy the preſs, the preſs would deſtroy them.*

IDEM

——— Ever witneſs for him
Ipſwich and Oxford! one of which fell with him;
The other, though unfiniſh'd, yet ſo famous,

---

* Dedication to Middleton's Letter from Rome.

So excellent in art, and ſtill ſo riſing,
That Chriſtendom ſhall ever ſpeak his virtue.

There is, in this eulogium of Chriſt-church college, at Oxford, ſomething, ſurely, that looks prophetical. No other ſeminary in Europe has perhaps been ſo fertile in perſons famous for uſeful learning, extent of genius, and elegance of taſte in the belles lettres.

It is with a degree of pleaſure I have ſelected, from the beſt hiſtorians, paſſages to confirm that draught of the ſhining part of Wolſey's portrait given by Shakſpeare. But it cannot be controverted that the dark ſhades of it wanted the brighteſt tints to ſet them off. The eminent ſuperiority of his genius he principally employed to the advancement of his own power, intereſt, and grandeur; his ambition was as inſatiable as his avarice, and with them his pride and cruelty went an equal pace. He gave certain indications of a little mind, for he was ſuperſtitious and vindictive.

One of thoſe enormous croſſes, which always accompanied him wherever he went, happening, at an entertainment, to fall, and hurt one of his retinue, he aſked whether the blow had fetched blood? and, being anſwered in the affirmative, he cried *Malum omen!* and retired to his chamber.

During the time that he was a ſchool-maſter, a quarrel happened between him and Sir James Paulet, who, to gratify his anger, had Wolſey put into the ſtocks.—Many years after this fray, when the Cardinal was advanced to the poſt of lord-high-chancellor of England, he ſent for Paulet; and, after reproaching him ſternly for his former behaviour to him, he, by his own authority, obliged him to remain in London five or ſix years.*

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* Hollingſhead.

QUEEN KATHARINE.

Cauſe the muſicians play me that *ſad note*
I nam'd my knell.

Sad note is, 'that ſoft and melancholy air which pleaſes me.'

The Emperor Charles V. Katharine's nephew, when retired to the monaſtery of Juſt, in Eſtremadura, cauſed the ſolemn dirge to be played before him which was to be performed at his funeral obſequies.

The Viſion of Angels.

No dramatic author ever took ſuch indefatigable pains to feed the eye and the ear, as well as the underſtanding, as Shakſpeare. What effect this viſion might produce on the audience originally is not now to be learned. That it was repreſented before Mrs. Betterton, when ſhe acted Queen Katharine, ſoon after the Reſtoration, is certain. Though the author ſhews fancy in this little pantomime, yet it ſeems fitter, at preſent, to tempt an audience to mirth and ridicule than to ſerious attention. The grave congees, ſolemn dancings, and ſtately courteſies, of theſe aerial beings, put us in mind of Bayes's grand dance; and perhaps the Duke of Buckingham borrowed a hint of it from this viſion. In the third act of the Rehearſal, Bayes, chiding the players for their aukwardneſs, tells them they 'dance worſe than the fat ſpirits in the Tempeſt or the angels in Henry VIII.'

MESSENGER.

An't like your grace ------------

KATHARINE.

------ You are a ſaucy fellow.

The Meſſenger, forgetting to pay Katharine the reſpect due to majeſty, raiſes her indignation even in her laſt agony; and this is truly a part of that lady's character. All the homage, which was paid to her before the divorce, ſhe determined to preſerve to the laſt. The king employed commiſſioners to ſettle her houſe as Princeſs-dowager of Wales, who would have placed ſervants about her, to treat her as ſuch; but this impoſition ſhe rejected with diſdain.

The virtues of Queen Katharine are celebrated by all hiſtorians. Her form was little calculated to retain the affections of ſuch a man as Henry; but, though he could not love her, ſuch was her conformity to his will, and ſuch the innocence of her life, he ever ſpoke of her with great reſpect, and profeſſed the higheſt reverence for her virtues.

That Katharine ſhould perſiſt in denying, with an oath, the conſummation of her marriage with Prince Arthur, conſidering the evidence which was produced of it, hiſtorians in general ſeem to wonder: but, when we reflect what herſelf and her daughter, the Princeſs Mary, might loſe by owning the completion of the marriage, we ſhall rather, I believe, pity her ſituation, which reduced her to ſo unhappy a dilemma, than condemn her perſeverance. The abſolution of a confeſſor might operate like a charm upon her mind; nor is it, I hope, uncharitable to ſuppoſe, that ſuch a cordial would not be refuſed.

During this truly-pathetic ſcene, the behaviour of Mrs. Pritchard, the repreſenter of Katharine, was reſpectable; but her beſt efforts could not reach the grace and dignity of geſture, much leſs the heart-touching tenderneſs, of Mrs. Porter. In this actreſs it was obſerved, that a very bad voice did not obſtruct the forcible expreſſion of exceſſive grief.

Act V. Scene the firſt.

Shakſpeare has ſelected ſuch parts of Henry's life as would rather reflect honour than diſgrace on his memory. Though, in general, he had confined himſelf to that period of his hiſtory which is comprehended in about twelve or thirteen years, from the attainder of Buckingham to the chriſtening of Queen Elizabeth.—he has, notwithſtanding, by the help of anachroniſm, contrived to inſert the inſidious plot of Cranmer's enemies to ruin him in the king's favour, and Henry's generous reſentment of their treachery.

CRANMER.

The *good* I ſtand on.

The *good* means 'the foundation of truth I rely on.'

KING.

——— Is the queen deliver'd ?
Say aye, and of a boy !

By what has been already ſaid, it appears the king moſt ardently wiſhed for male iſſue.—This ſhort and quick interrogation ſtrongly marks it. Anne Bullen was, about two years afterwards, delivered of a dead male child: and this circumſtance, above all others, alienated the king's affection from her.

OLD LADY.

An hundred marks! By this light, I'll have more!

Mrs. Willis, a moſt excellent actreſs in low humour, played this ſmall, and, I believe, generally thought inſignificant part, many years. She threw into this old lady, as well as into every thing ſhe acted, ſo much truth and nature, that the audience never diſmiſſed her without marks of approbation.

Let me here give an anecdote of her and Theophilus Cibber.—I may not, perhaps, find a place for it elſewhere. She lived to a great age with its worſt companion, poverty. A charitable collection was ſet on foot for her relief amongſt the players, who never turn their backs upon want and affliction. The. Cibber was then very young and wild. When ſhe applied to him his finances were ſo low, that he denied her with the excuſe that he had a large family. "O dear Sir, (ſaid Mrs. Willis) how can that be? you have neither wife nor child." "It may be ſo, (replied he) but I have a large family of *vices*, madam!"—An attempt at wit is a poor compenſation for the want of charity. It might juſtly have been retorted by the diſtreſſed ſuitor, but that misfortune is a great enemy to preſence of mind, and repartee; that the Family the witty comedian alluded to, was ſuch a one as it would be diſgraceful to maintain, and noble to get rid of; and which wiſe conduct would enable him to aſſiſt *virtuous* Families, inſtead of feeding his Family of *Vices.*

CHANCELLOR.

Speak to the buſineſs, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Theobald, forgetting that Shakſpeare had, in this inſtance, broke through his original deſign, by introducing the conſpiracy againſt Cranmer, will have it that the chancellor of the ſcene was Sir Thomas Audley, ſucceſſor of Sir Thomas More; but he died in 1544, two years before the plan was concerted to ruin the archbiſhop. Wriotheſly was Audley's ſucceſſor, and conſequently, the chancellor whom Shakſpeare meant.

GARDINER.

Which reformation muſt be ſudden too!

So averſe was Gardiner to all innovation whatſoever, and ſo firm a friend to eſtabliſhed error, in matters of mere indifference, that he oppoſed, with all his might, the more accurate pronunciation of the Greek tongue, introduced by ſome learned men into our univerſities. The Papiſts adhered to the old method, and the Proteſtants favoured the new. This was a reaſon ſufficiently powerful, with this hot zealot, to employ the authority of the king and council to ſuppreſs any propoſed reformation in this particular, by perpetuating the corrupt ſound of the Greek alphabet. The penalties of diſobedience, inflicted by Gardiner, were whipping, degradation, and expulſion.

CROMWELL.

——Would you were half ſo honeſt!

Shakſpeare throws out no idle or ill-founded charges. When Gardiner was ambaſſador at the court of France, being extremely averſe to the progreſs of any eccleſiaſtical reformation, on which he found his maſter very intent, it was ſuſpected that he betrayed the intereſt of Henry to the French king.

SURREY.

May it pleaſe your majeſty——

KING.

No, Sir, it does not pleaſe me.

This angry interruption of the king is always uttered with vehemence. And this event falling out a year before the king's death, the author ſeems to point out Henry's fixed averſion to the earl, whom with his father, the duke of Norfolk, he proſecuted with inexpiable rage. The pretended crime of both was quartering the king's arms with their own; a practice juſtified by the heralds. For this, and other frivolous pretences, the earl was tried by a jury of commoners and condemned to die. His defence was noble, becoming his birth and his undaunted ſpirit. He was executed about ten years before Henry died. The humble ſubmiſſion of the duke availed him nothing: all his ſervices, in defeating the Scots and ſubduing ſeveral rebellions within the kingdom, were forgotten. The king apprehended that the duke and his ſon would diſturb the ſettlement of government which he had planned for Edward, his ſucceſſor; he therefore determined to get rid of them both.—nor could his approaching death, nor the ſenſe of the enormous cruelties he had committed, ſoften his ſavage and obdurate mind. Being unable to ſign his name to the warrant for the duke's execution, he made uſe of a ſeal contrived for that purpoſe: happily the king died before the day appointed for Norfolk's execution. The council thought it would be unpopular to begin the new reign with the death of ſo great and popular a man as the duke of Norfolk.

GARDINER.

With a true heart and brother's love.

The king obliges Gardiner to embrace Cranmer twice. The coldneſs of the latter, who could not conceal his hatred at the firſt embrace, cauſes a ſmothered laugh in the ſpectators: but when, at the king's command, he is obliged to be more in earneſt, his apparently aſſumed alacrity raiſes a general burſt of laughter and much loud clapping.

The chaſte manner of Ben Jonſon, the actor, would admit of no farce or buffoonery, in perſonating the ſplenetic Gardiner. He preſerved all the decorum proper to the character of a biſhop and privy-counſellor. Hippiſley went a ſtep farther, and added ſome ſtrokes of humour, which approached to grimace; and this cauſed a mirth unſuitable to the character of the perſons. But Taſwell's Gardiner degenerated into abſolute trick and buffoonery, and, when he followed Cranmer, at the cloſe of the ſcene, to make the upper gallery ſport, he held his crutch over his head. This was the more inexcuſable in him, as he wanted not judgment to inform him better, but he pitifully ſacrificed his knowledge of propriety to the pleaſure of diverting the moſt ignorant part of the audience, for which he ſometimes paid very dear; for the judicious part of the ſpectators exploded, by a hiſs, ſuch violent miſrepreſentation.

Scene III.

PORTER.

He ſhould be a braſier by his face, for, on my conſcience, twenty of the dog-days reign in his noſe.

Our author ſeems fond of exerciſing his wit on pimpled faces and carbuncled noſes, and Bardolph is introduced into the play of Harry IV. for no other reaſon.

' A braſier, ſays Dr. Johnſon, ſignifies a man that manufactures braſs, and a maſs of metal occaſionally hated to convey warmth; both are here underſtood." I ſhould think that here the latter only was meant. Of this, we are certain that the ancients were of opinion that all manufacturers of braſs were remarkable for vigour in the eyes and happineſs of ſight.

In the Odyſſey, book the 13th, Homer calls braſs νυηνορα χαλκον, which is tranſlated *Vires honeſtans æs.* In the Sympoſiacs of Plutarch, book the 3d, there is a very curious obſervation upon the power of braſs to invigorate the eye-ſight, and even to reſtore loſt eye-laſhes. I will give the paſſage as I find it almoſt verbally tranſlated by Macrobius, in the 7th book of his Saturnalia: "Qui in metallo æris morantur ſemper oculorum ſanitate pollent, et quibus ante palpebræ nudatæ fuerant illinc conveſtiuntur. Aura enim quæ ex ære procedit, in oculos incidens, haurit et exccat quod male influit, unde et Homerus modo ευηνορα χαλκον, modo εὔροπα χαλκον, has cauſas ſecutus, appellat." Braſs ſeems to have the ſame power to exhilarate the ſight, that Venus had to give brilliance to the eyes of her ſon:

> Et lætos oculis afflarat honores.
>
> VIRGIL.

CRANMER.

> ——— She ſhall be
> A pattern to all princes living with her,
> And all that ſhall ſucceed.

This character of Elizabeth, drawn by Shakſpeare, is not unlike that entertained by moſt Engliſhmen and *all* foreigners till very lately. It is now become almoſt a faſhion to declaim violently againſt her, and repreſent her as a moſt diſagreeable woman and a tyrannical princeſs.

A very elegant writer has, in a dialogue between three eminent perſons, compoſed a moſt ſevere inquiſition into her private and public conduct. A detection of deformities ſaved from oblivion, the publication of which can anſwer no rational purpoſe,

poſe, might, I think, with ſubmiſſion, have been ſpared. Eraſe the name of Elizabeth from the catalogue of good Engliſh monarchs, and I believe the acuteſt ſight will ſcarcely be able to point out one from the Conqueſt to the Revolution: I mean, by a good prince, one that conſults, in the general tenor of his conduct, the real intereſt of the people. It is pleaſant enough to find, that Mr. Addiſon, who, in all the writings in which he had occaſion to mention this lady, ſpoke of her with the higheſt eulogium, is, in this dialogue, made to hold the ſcalping-knife, and diſſect her with a ſeverity and keenneſs very different from his uſual ſtyle of writing. This is very ſtrangely accounted for by the reverend and learned writer, who tells us, that Addiſon's public and private opinion of this great princeſs were very diſcordant. This exoteric and eſoteric doctrine is extremely fanciful and dangerous; for, according to this principle, Dr. Hurd's name may, by ſome future writer, be made uſe of as a panegyriſt of Elizabeth; and Lord Bolingbroke, who in his writings extols the character and political conduct of this queen beyond meaſure, may be introduced as a moſt bitter ſatiriſt againſt her.

After all, if we examine her merit fairly, it muſt be from a different principle than that which ſeems to have guided the pen of this eminent writer. We ſhould conſider her as living at a time when the prerogative was ſuperior to law, and not as if ſhe had reigned when the boundaries between the prince and the people were fixed at the Revolution. To bring her conduct to a teſt, on doctrines and cuſtoms eſtabliſhed at this late period, would be to try her on an ex poſt facto law.

Mr. Hume, in a comprehenſive and maſterly manner, has fairly and accurately drawn the portrait of Elizabeth. He has candidly ſeparated the public from the private character; he has conſidered her as a rational being, placed in authority and entruſted with the government of mankind. We may, ſays this ſagacious writer, find it difficult to reconcile our fancy to her as a wife or a miſtreſs; but her qualities as a ſovereign, though with ſome conſiderable exceptions, are the object of undiſputed applauſe and approbation.

To enter into a full diſcuſſion of Henry's character is not the buſineſs of him who is not called upon to go farther than his original author. Shakſpeare has given the fair ſide of this prince, and ſuch as a daughter might behold without bluſhing. Had he given a ſecond part of Henry VIII. without great ſoftening, he muſt have preſented ſuch a picture, perhaps, as no audience could bear; and yet we muſt not preſume to doubt our author's ſkill in the art of colouring, or making that portrait not only bearable, but ſought after, which, in the hands of another, would perhaps be utterly diſguſting; witneſs the Life and Death of King John, and his Richard III. princes more offenſive to humanity than even Henry VIII.

To the worſt and moſt arbitrary kings this nation has eventually been indebted for its greateſt happineſs. John's exceſſive cruelty and oppreſſion produced Magna Charta. The violence of Hen. VIII. freed England from papal power and the popiſh religion. To the weak and obſtinate efforts of Ja. II. to extend the prerogative beyond law, we owe the ſettlement at the Revolution and the ſucceſſion of the Hanover line.

In a play, called La Ciſma de Inglaterra, Calderone, the celebrated Spaniſh poet, has treated of the ſubject of Henry's divorce. The characters of Henry, Wolſey and Queen Katherine, are not ill ſuſtained. The King, indeed, he makes conſcious of acting ill all through the play; his violent love for Anna Bullen is the only cauſe of his divorcing Katharine, in which he is ſupported and prompted by Wolſey. The unhappy Bullen is proud, inſolent, ungrateful, and laſcivious, as moſt Roman Catholic authors repreſent her. Her intrigue with Carlos, the French ambaſſador, is diſcovered by the King, who in his cloſet overhears their diſcourſe. In a rage, he orders her to be ſent to the Tower; ſhe is beheaded, and her dead trunk is ſoon after brought on the ſtage. In the parliament-ſcene, which is by far the beſt, the king gives his reaſons for the divorce with a mixture of feigned regret and ſome cold compliments to Katharine: he ſwears to ſupport the ſucceſſion of his daughter Mary, and, without any ceremony, bids the Queen ſubmit to her fate and retire to a convent; then, turning to the parliament, he declares he will make that man ſhorter by the head who ſhall preſume to think that he is in the wrong:

Y el vaſallo que ſintiere
Mal, advierta temeroſo,
Que le quitare al inſtante
La cabeza de los ombros.

The Queen's anſwer is extremely affecting, and worthy the name of Calderone.—Her love to the King is not to be ſhaken, notwithſtanding the cruel ſentence he has pronounced againſt her. With a proteſtation the moſt paſſionate, ſhe declares nothing can be terrible to her except his hatred. She diſclaims any appeal to the emperor, her victorious nephew; nor can ſhe think of entering a convent, for ſhe is his married wife; and concludes with calling him her lord, her happineſs, her king, and dear huſband.

Upon the whole, though we ſhould allow that the play has in it many poetical beauties, yet it is, in *dramatic ſtamina*, greatly inferior to the Engliſh play. Calderone breaks through the unities of time and place as freely as our author.

END OF VOL. I.

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